Ikuru and Ai...

They lived near the ocean, in a house with a tall roof and a windmill...

Ikuru was a skinny and gangly boy, who was also quite tall.
He was a quiet, kind-hearted boy who excelled at cooking.
And, although he faced much sadness, he remained positive.

Ai, as she was named by Ikuru, was a girl with a round smiling face.
She loved drawing, playing the piano or the guitar, and caring for her tomato garden.

Ikuru and Ai were happy together.

It was the world's final summer vacation.
It was their first, and final love.

The world was like a sparkling light.
The blue sky they saw was extremely beautiful.

Each was irreplaceable to the other,
beloved by one another...

They had a great life.

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# 愛人 [AI-REN] 5

## CONTENTS


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ＃35.5 | 雪景色~にんげんのふるさと~ | …7 |
| ＃36 | 夏の恋人 | …21 |
| ＃37 | 初夜 | …43 |
| ＃38 | 夜 | …69 |
| ＃39 | 海・明け方の夢 | …93 |
| ＃40 | 帰宅 | …115 |
| ＃40.5 | また明日 | …137 |
| ＃41 | 手紙 | …159 |
| ＃42 | ヨシズミ・イクル | …179 |
| ＃42.5 | あいの絵日記Ⅲ~ヨシズミ・イクルの遺品より~ | 209 |
| ＃43 | 春の日に、君と帰る | …231 |



JETS COMICS



この作品はフィクションです。実在の人物・団体・事件などにはいっさい関係ありません。

I REMEMBER IT CLEARLY...

LATE IN THE AFTERNOON, AROUND THE TIME SCHOOL ENDED...

I WAS SPEAKING WITH NAGI HARUKA AND MR. MIYAZAKI, A MUNICIPAL WORKER.

I WANTED TO COME HERE, NO MATTER WHAT...

TOGETHER WITH AI...

THE PLACE WAS OVER-FLOWING WITH THE REALITY THOSE WHO NEEDED AI-REN WERE TRYING SO HARD TO AVOID...

I'M SORRY FOR BEING UNREASON-ABLE...

DON'T WORRY, IT'S NO BIG DEAL.

WE WERE VISITING THE AI-REN THAT THEY WERE PRODUCING...

IT WAS A SURPRISE...

IKURU...

愛人 [AI-REN]

愛人

[AI-REN]

IT'S SNOW!

# Chapter 35.5
## Snowy Landscape
### ~Humanity's Hometown~

あいれん【愛人】[ài-ren]

An artifical being created to provide mental comfort in the final stages of a terminally ill patient's life.

The Ai-Ren are frozen until it is time for them to fulfill their duties.

When the applicant's death approaches, they recieve their 'Ai-Ren'

Their rebirth as "Ai-Ren" is only temporary...

THE TWO, ON THAT FIRST LEVEL OF THAT UNDERGROUND CEMETERY...

...HAD COME TO SEE THE GRAVESTONE UNDER WHICH SHE HAD ONCE SLEPT...

DROP

SSH

AND THEN THEY WERE SILENT FOR A LONG TIME.

SHE TILTED HER HEAD TO THE SIDE,

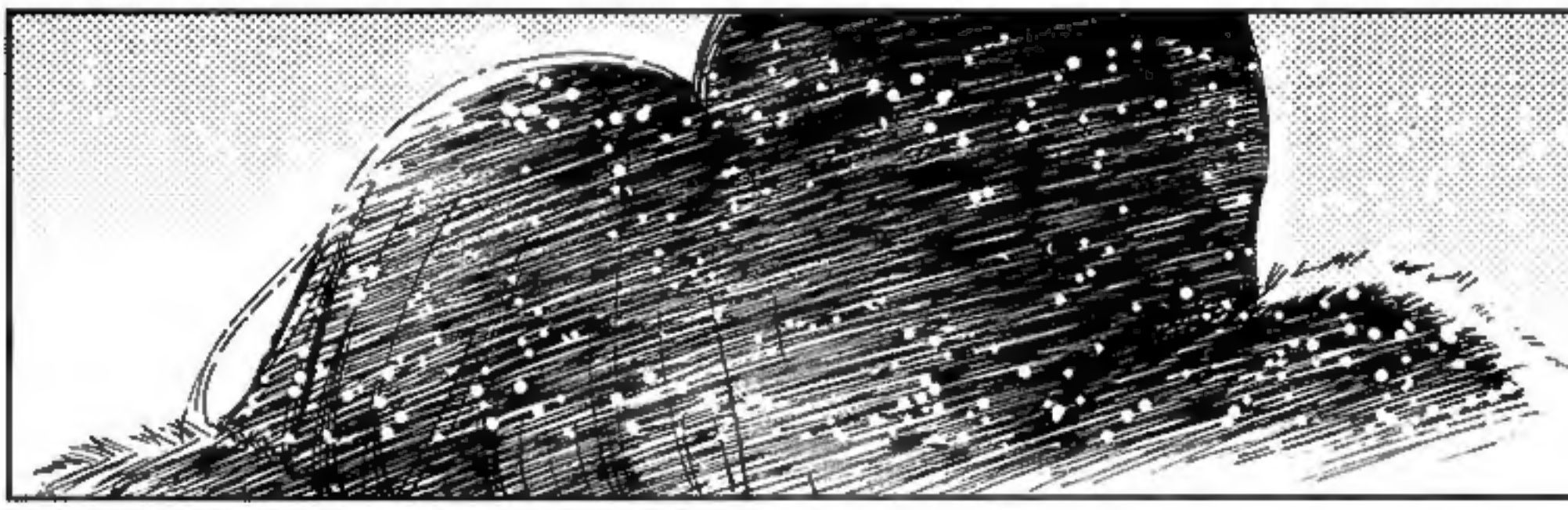
IN A FAINT VOICE, HE SAID "I'M SORRY..."

...MADE ME TRULY ENVIOUS...

THOUGH IT WAS STRANGE, THAT SCENE I WATCHED...

EH?

They died?



Really...

So they died..?

BZZZ

BZZ

BZZZ

It was an ideal peaceful death wasn't it?

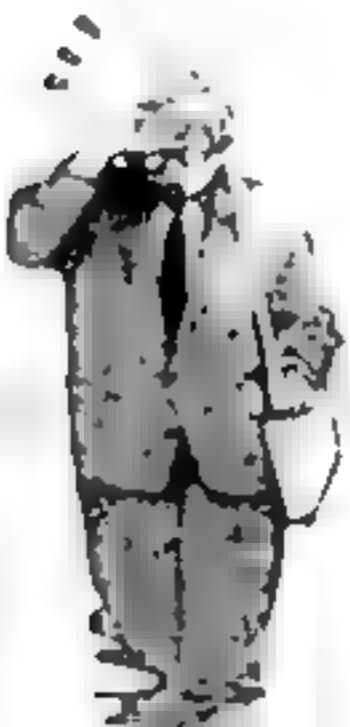
Wasn't it?

Because I

BZZ

what their last moments were like?

BZZ



HEY WAIT!

AI'S DRIVING!

NO WAY! YOU'RE TOO FAST AND RECKLESS!

PUU-

PBTH!

PBB-

PBBTH!

THE TWO OF YOU HAVE SUCH A GOOD RELATION-SHIP!

scratch scratch

BZZ

AH-

HAHA-HA!

BZZT

AH, SORRY, EXCUSE ME.

I KNOW THAT THEY CAN NEVER BE MORE THAN AN ILLUSION..

"AI-REN" ARE A CRUEL HYPOCRISY ..

I ENVY YOU TWO ..

YEAH!

DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING FUN PLANNED FOR TODAY?

THE TWO OF YOU ARE REALLY GLAD YOU MET, AREN'T YOU?

BUT,

BUT ..

YUP!

..I WISHED THEM THE BEST, FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART.

THEN..

It's been said that the age of humanity cannot simply end peacefully.

Instead, the curse of biological weapons will mark its destruction.

The day they came to visit was the afternoon before humanity's death sentence was pronounced.

[AI-REN]

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# 愛人 [AI-REN]

## Chapter 36. Summer Lover

AFTER LEAVING THE MUNICIPAL OFFICE, WE WENT TO THIS MARKET BY BICYCLE!

BEGIN SHOPPING!

MM!

TODAY'S DINNER IS SPECIAL.

BECAUSE TODAY IS

SHINE

THE MOST IMPORTANT DINNER IN OUR LIVES..

TWINKLE

OUR FIRST PAYDAY

WE'RE CAREFULLY SELECTING INGREDIENTS

JUST AS WE HAD DECIDED

WE'RE BUYING TODAY'S MEAL WITH THAT MONEY.

THE MONEY WE RECEIVED FROM EVERYONE, WITH A HEARTY "GOOD WORK."

TO FILL OURSELVES WITH PRIDE AND GRATITUDE

CLACK

CLACK

BECAUSE TONIGHT

HO~

CLICK

HO~

CLACK

HO~

IT'S TONIGHT, RIGHT?

TONIGHT WILL BE THE "FIRST NIGHT" FOR AI AND ME...

YEAH.

MINE TOO

THUMP

THUMP

BECAUSE MY HEART IS POUNDING!

IT'S BEATING REALLY FAST!

THUMP

THUMP

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO. '

WE'LL BE HOME SOON!

DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO?

YEAH, TONIGHT

COULD FEEL HER HEART BEATING...

SHE PRESSED HER BREASTS AGAINST ME...

OKAY.

LET'S MAKE THIS A HAPPY NIGHT...

AI...

YEAH

BA—

OKAY!

Hop on, Ikuru!

AHH!

SHAA

♫ ♫ Hyo—! ♫

THAT SEAS DE ROAD
THAT SEEMED TO
STRETCH FOREVER,
AT ITS END

. IS A
LONE
HOUSE
WITH A
BIG
ROOF

I'M HOME!

A AND ...VE N
TH S H(U)SE

HUP

I'M HOME!

OUR FAMOUS LONG-LIFE TOMATO PLANT—

AND LONG-LIFE TOMATOES GENERATION II

I'M HOME, LITTLE ONES!

BANG

GO GET CHANGED AND WE'LL START COOKING

OKAY!

YEAH

SOON THEY WON'T NEED THE SUPPORT POLES ANYMORE

R...RE? R...RE?

STIR
STIR
SILENCE
HM?
HMM, GOOD, GOOD.
THUMP
STIR
STIR
WHAT IS IT?
NOTH-ING!
STIR
STIR

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT?

YOU WERE JUST THINKING SOMETHING DIRTY, WEREN'T YOU?

"EVEN THAT IS AN EXPRESSION OF LOVE."

WHILE I WAS AT THE RESEARCH LAB, HARUKA SENSE TOLD ME THIS.

A AND I SEARCHED HARD FOR MAGES FROM OUR EARLY DAYS...

IT'S S MPLE. WE LOVE EACH OTHER . WE'RE LOVED BY EACH OTHER..

YO

HISHO

FLAP

Ooh!

Oh!

WE WILL NOT LIVE IN THIS WORLD FOREVER.

WE WILL LOSE THESE BODIES...

AI'S BODY... AND MINE...

..TRULY YEARN FOR ONE ANOTHER

HERE WE GO

THE TWO OF US

HMM...
NUDGE
AH-
M'LADY
PULL

OH-

GLUB GLUB

FIZZ

POP

HRM.

WE PUT ON NICE CLOTHES ..

THUMP THUMP

UH-

SOME SWEET ALCOHOL...

IT'S BLEEDING ..

MEAT STILL DRIPPING WITH BLOOD

FRUIT...

SOUP..

RICE ..

THE VEGETABLES THAT WE GREW TOGETHER

IKURU IS REALLY GREAT!

DELICIOUS!

.. THE LAST TIME I WILL PLACE FOOD IN MY MOUTH...

WHAT AI MADE IS GOOD TOO!

THIS IS..

CHIRP CHIRP

THIS IS HOW HUMANS WERE CONCEIVED...

LONG AGO,

YEAH.

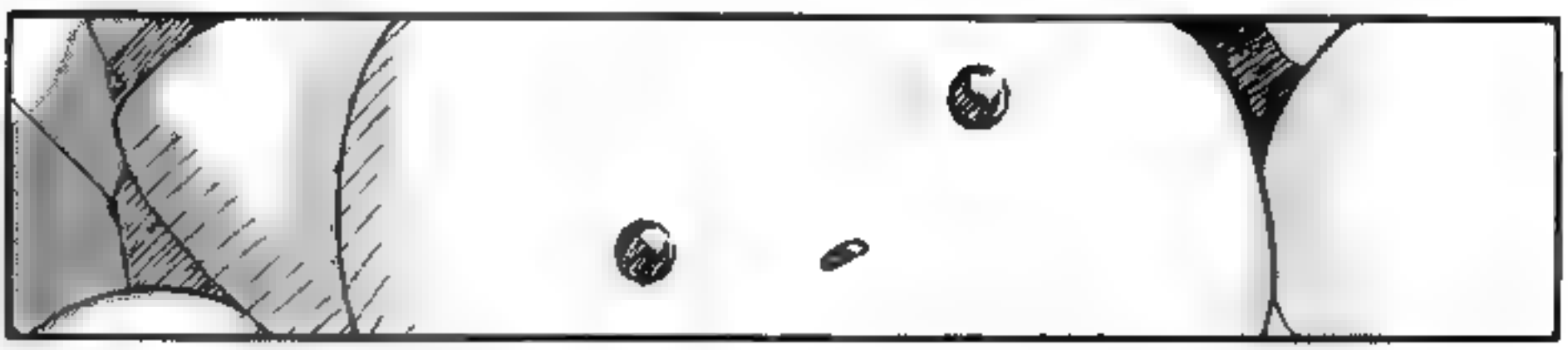
THE BABY OF ME AND AI...

A BABY?

AND WHEN THAT CHILD GROWS UP AND MEETS SOMEONE...

If a miracle were to happen

It would take around 10 months for a child to be born into this world



which is approximately the same as AI's lifespan
or more

SCRUB
SCRUB

YEAH.

DOES IT FEEL GOOD?

ALRIGHT, GIVE ME YOUR ARM...

AH-
♡

rub rub rub rub

AI-♡

OOH-!

SQUEEZE

SQUEEZE

SQUEEZE

SQUEEZE

HEY! HOLD STILL!

AI-♡

AI-♡

AI-♡

AI-♡

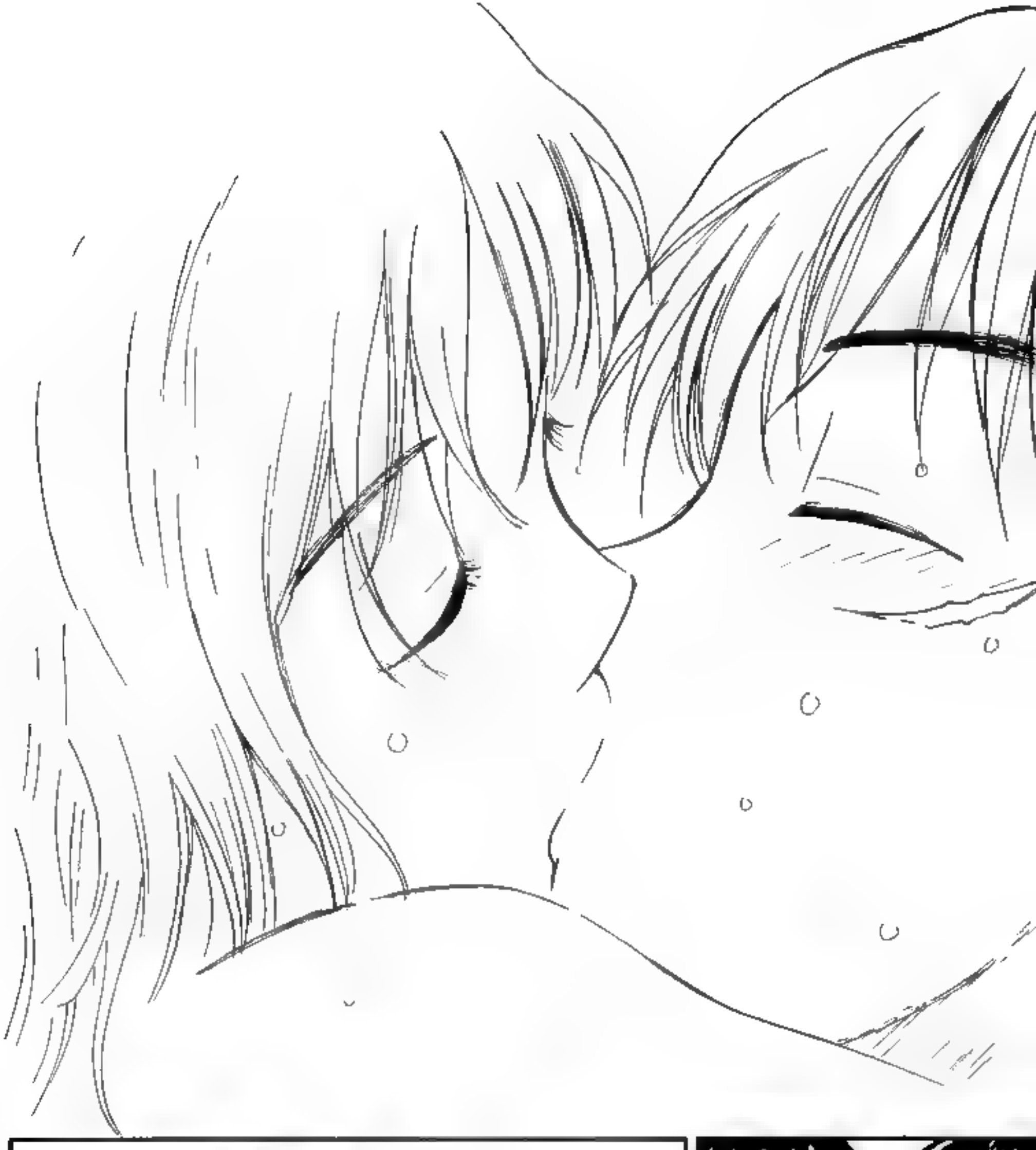
AHH~♡

Al...

slip-

Ah...

MM...


SMACK

WHEN WE KISS, YOU GET A LOT BIGGER HERE...

♡

.....

THUMP

THUMP

THUMP

FUUU-

THE PLACE WHERE YOU PUT THAT INSIDE AI...

WHAT DO YOU THINK? ISN'T IT COOL?

IF IKURU GOES IN THERE,

HE'LL BE LIKE AI'S BABY ..

THE PLACE WHERE BABIES COME FROM...

AI WILL LET YOU PUT YOUR WHOLE BODY IN .

IT'S TOO BAD ! CAN'T PUT MY WHOLE BODY IN THERE...

I WANT TO GIVE BIRTH TO IKURU...

[ Chapter 36 / End ]

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# 愛人

[AI-REN]

## Chapter 37. First Night

THERE STOOD
"AI,"CLAD IN
PURE WHITE
UNDERWEAR

. GLIDING
THROUGH THE
STARLIGHT ..

HER DREAM-LIKE
BEAUTY...

A SIGH ESCAPED MY LIPS...

AI, YOU'RE WONDERFUL..

YEAH...

YOU SAID YOU'D WEAR IT ON A SPECIAL OCCASION.

THAT'S THE UNDERWEAR THAT WE PICKED OUT TOGETHER, ISN'T IT?

HEHE..

A SPECIAL OCCASION. .

Ahh

KURU...

DON'T WORRY,

AI WON'T BREAK

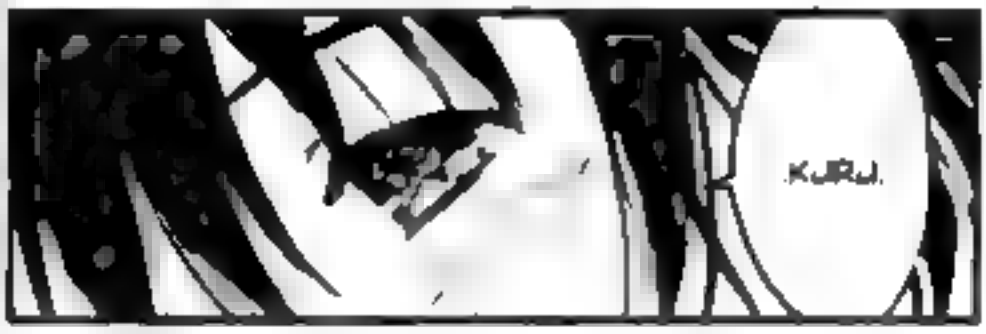
BENEATH THAT DELICATE BRA..

..WERE AI'S PURE WHITE BREASTS..

A MYSTERIOUS SWEET SCENT PERMEATED THE EVENING AIR...

HER BREASTS ROSE GENTLY W TH EACH BREATH..

MY CHEST WAS READY TO BURST WITH THE LOVE STORED INSIDE..


KURU.

STEP

KURU.

IKURU...

MY LEGS TREMBLED...

WALKING OVER TO MY BELOVED,

A SWEET VOICE, CALLING MY NAME...

...WAS COMPLETELY UNBEARABLE...

Ai...

...come here!

yes..!

HOLDING A .

HER WARMTH AND WEIGHT..

OUR EXISTENCE BECAME PERFECTLY CLEAR
NOTHING MORE THAN JUST FLESH AND BLOOD

THIS WEIGHT THAT I HELD FIRMLY IN MY ARMS..

BREATHING SOFTLY

Ai..!

MM...
MM...

MM...

THUMP

THUMP

THUMP

THUMP

Ai...

THUMP

THUMP

THUMP

THUMP

IKURU..

THUMP

HA-

AH...

HA-

HA-

Before I knew it,

I was praying...

I was praying with everything I had...

A 'S SOFT, CURVED BODY..

..BELOVED
TREASURE

MY..

SOMETHING SO PRECIOUS.

SOMEHOW..

Somehow, I must not lose her...

Somehow, I must not lose her.

IKURU...

IKURU...

IKURU...

IKURU

AI

I love you.

I will give you all the life I have.

[ Chapter 37 / End ]

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# 愛人

[AI-REN]

## Chapter 38 - Night

I WAS INFORMED BY A MIDNIGHT VISITOR...

...THAT TONIGHT WOULD BE HUMANITY'S LAST NIGHT...

NAGI HARUKA... SENSEI..?

GOOD EVENING...

DR. MARK LINEBERGER
CHAIRMAN OF THE
PRESERVATION OF
HUMANITY'S SEED
IASH ANTARCTIC
HEADQUARTERS

ONE OF 3 OF US
WHO MET DIRECTLY
WITH KILIT..

ALL THE OTHER CREW MEMBERS ARE ALREADY DEAD...

WON'T LIVE TO SEE THE MORNING EITHER...

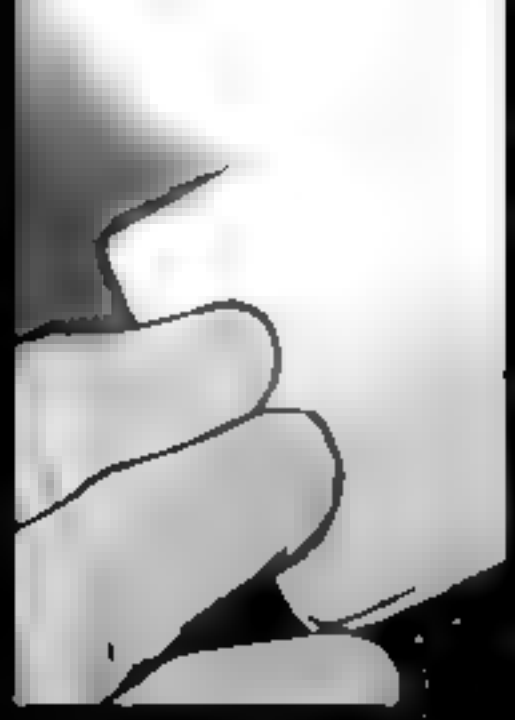
IT WAS A CURSE..

WHAT HAPPENED?

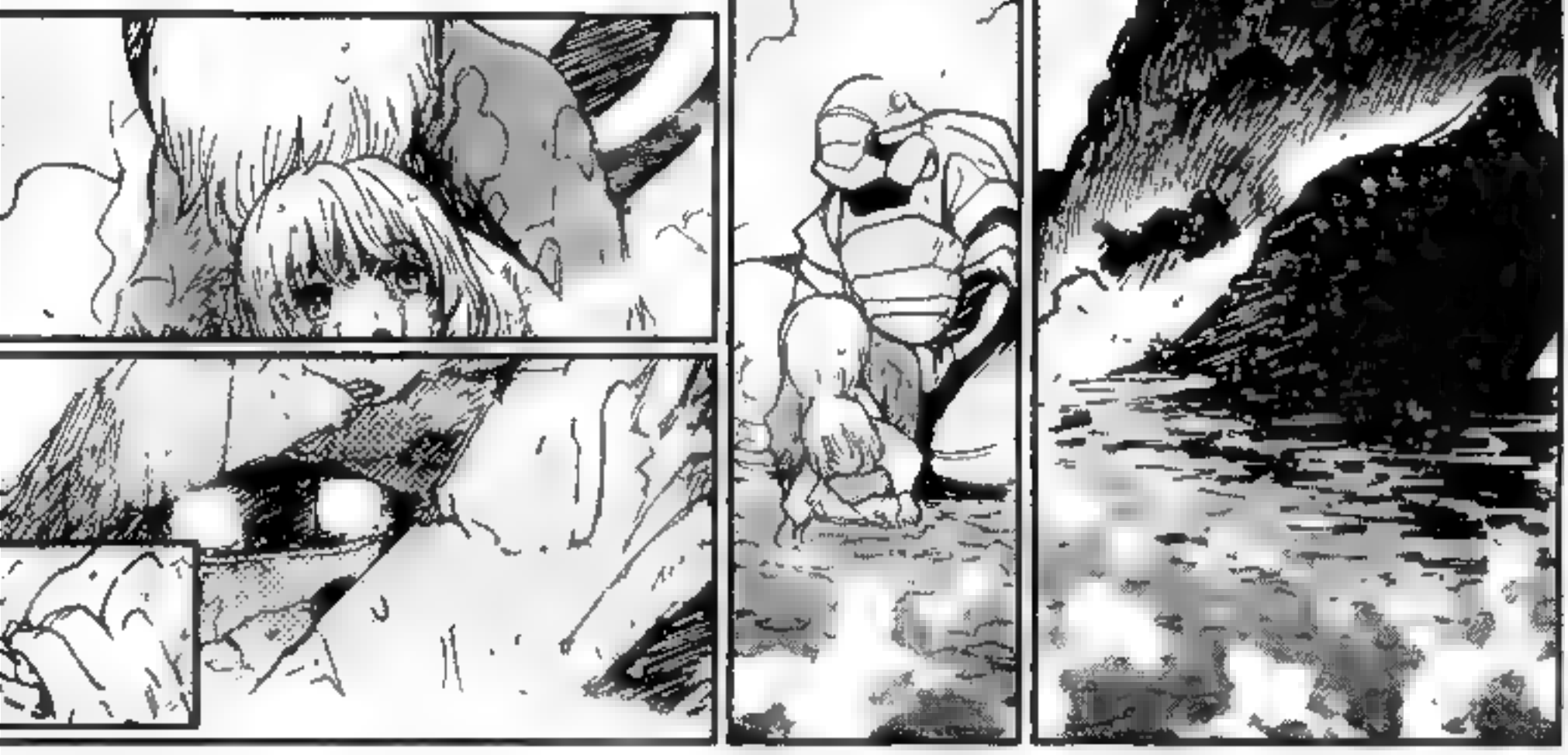
A CURSE?

SA

The world...



...has been cursed.



HITO has manifested itself as a symbiote.

SOME OF THOSE EXPOSED TO THE CURSE MANAGED TO LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO BE ANALYZED...

THE CHANGES THEY UNDERWENT WERE DIFFERENT FOR EACH PERSON...

LOOKING AT THE STATE OF THE WORLD RIGHT NOW...

BUT SURE ENOUGH, ALL OF THEM...

THEIR OUTWARD APPEARANCE DID NOT CHANGE AT ALL...

"this not the judg[illegible] upon humanity"

IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE, IT SPREAD THROUGH THE SKIES...

AND ALREADY, THERE IS NOT A PLACE IN THE WORLD THAT IS SAFE... OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT SOON.

THIS CURSE CAN PENETRATE PROTECTIVE CLOTHING ..

CAN BE CARRIED ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD BY THE WIND, REGARDLESS OF DISTANCE ..

ONCE THEIR DNA IS POLLUTED BY THE CURSE...

...THEIR LIVES CAN NO LONGER BE SALVAGED FROM THIS AFFLICTION...

Tonight is the final night of humanity.

WE HAVE NEVER FACED ANYTHING LIKE THIS.

...A DARK NIGHT OF SICKNESS, TERROR, AND SOLITUDE...

...WITH NO WAY TO LIGHT THE ROAD AHEAD...

OVER ALL THESE YEARS, WE'VE BECOME DEPENDENT.

BUT NEITHER SCIENCE NOR RELIGION WILL BE OF ANY USE...

WHETHER OR NOT WE'LL SEE THE DAWN AFTER THIS DARK NIGHT IS UNCERTAIN

THE TRUE FORM OF THIS CURSE IS PROBABLY NOT A VIRUS OR SOME NANOMACHINE...

THE ONLY POSSIBILITY IS...

NAGI HARUKA SENSEI...

SIXES...

. .A NEW HUMAN SPECIES.

THE TECHNOLOGY OF THE APOCALYPSE

HUMANITY'S FORCED EVOLUTION THROUGH ARTIFICIAL MEANS...

IT'S USELESS TO STRUGGLE AGAINST THE FUTURE

WHAT WE SOUGHT IN NAGI, BEFORE FINALLY SENDING IT TO SPACE...

DR. LINEBERGER,

WE LAUNCHED IT INTO SPACE BEFORE IT WAS COMPLETED ...

I DON'T HAVE THE ABILITY...

...I DO NOT HAVE A CURE FOR THIS CURSE.

IT'S UNFORTUNATE, BUT...

I DON'T HAVE THE ABILITY.

I AM A WOMAN WHO CAN NEITHER CURSE NOR CURE...

AFTER ALL,

THAT'S WHY I'M STILL HERE.

ZZZ

THE CHANGE WAS INSTANTANEOUS.

HAA-

AH

HA

AHH!

HA

AH-

THE CURSED MAN CRIED..

GO AHEAD, SPEAK. .

AHH!

AH!

AHH-

HA

WHAT ?!

THIS IS THE CURSE..!

HAA-

THIS IS TOO CRUEL...

TOMORROW, OR EVEN TONIGHT, A NEW AND INNOCENT LIFE MAY BE BORN INTO THIS WORLD...

HIS EYES HAD ALREADY GLAZED OVER..

GO ON...

...YET HIS TEARS CONTINUED TO STREAM...

FO...

...THEN THIS WORLD TRULY IS IN A STATE OF DARKNESS...

BUT, IF IT IS CURSED BEFORE IT'S EVEN BORN...

...FORGIVE ME.



SPLURT

LIVE!

I WON'T FORGIVE YOU!

YOU AREN'T FOR-GIVEN!!

YOU MUST LIVE TO SEE TOMORROW..!

THERE'S STILL HOPE..!

DESPITE BEING UNCURED,

DESPITE BEING CURSED,

YOU MUST LIVE!

WE MUST WELCOME IT!!

CHILDREN LIVING IN THE DARKNESS OF THIS IMPENDING CURSE,

OPEN YOUR ARMS AND WELCOME IT!

DESPITE THE PAIN...
DESPITE THE ILLNESS...
DESPITE THE CURSE,
WE LIVE.

BEGINNING TONIGHT, WE ARE A NEW HUMAN SPECIES...

WE ARE A NEW HUMAN SPECIES.

[ Chapter 38 / End ]

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# 愛人 [Aijin]

Chapter 50

## Dreaming of the Ocean at Dawn

ISN'T IT PRETTY?

EVERYTHING BEGAN IN THAT BLUE SKY...

ALWAYS ENTRUSTED TO US... WE INHERITED IT...

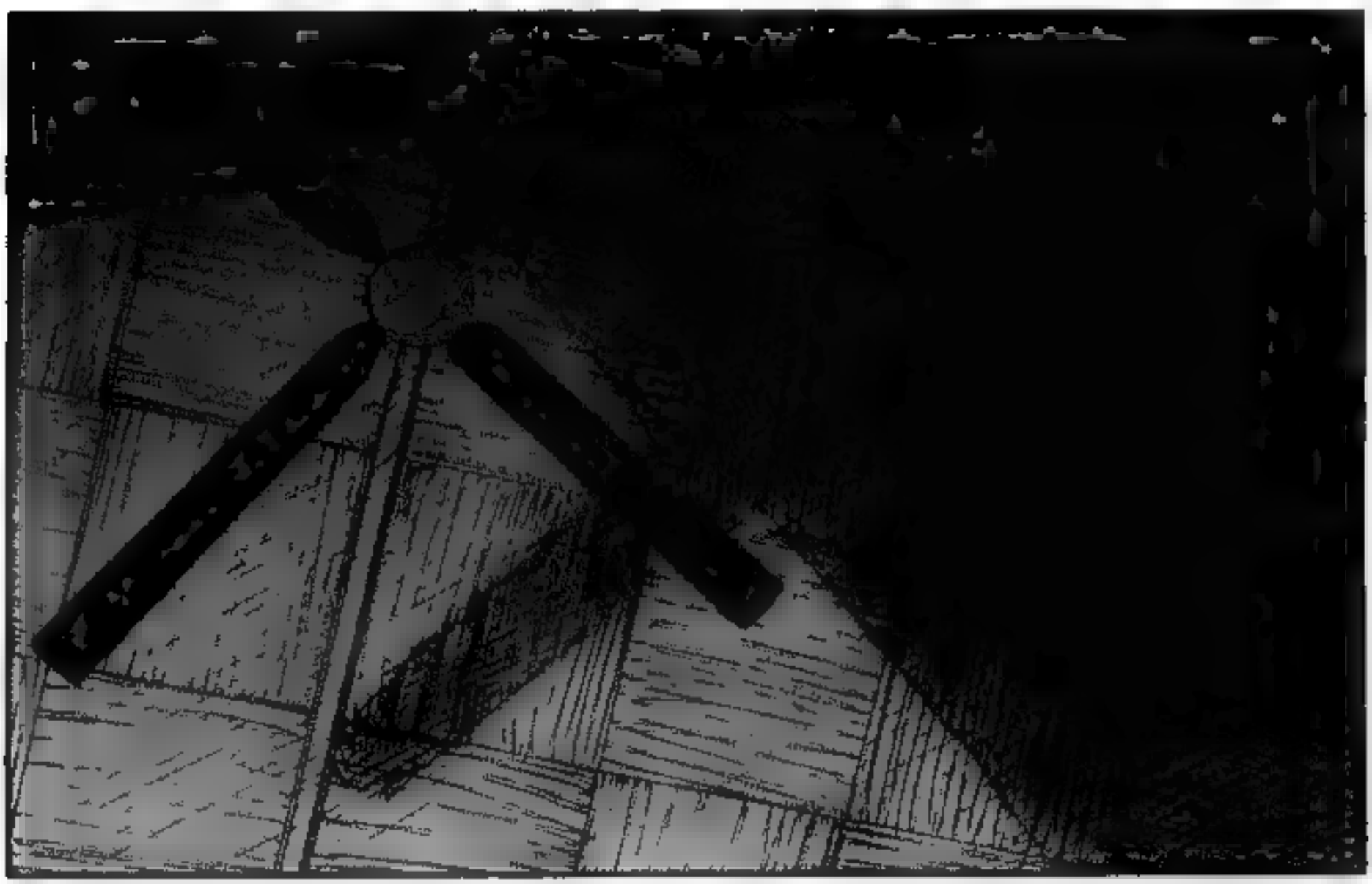
FROM OUR EARLIEST ANCESTORS... TO OUR PARENTS...

AND NOW, TO YOU...

CONGRATU-
LATIONS,
IKURU.

YOUR LIFE, AS
WITH ALL LIVES,
IS INVALUABLE TO
THIS PLANET.

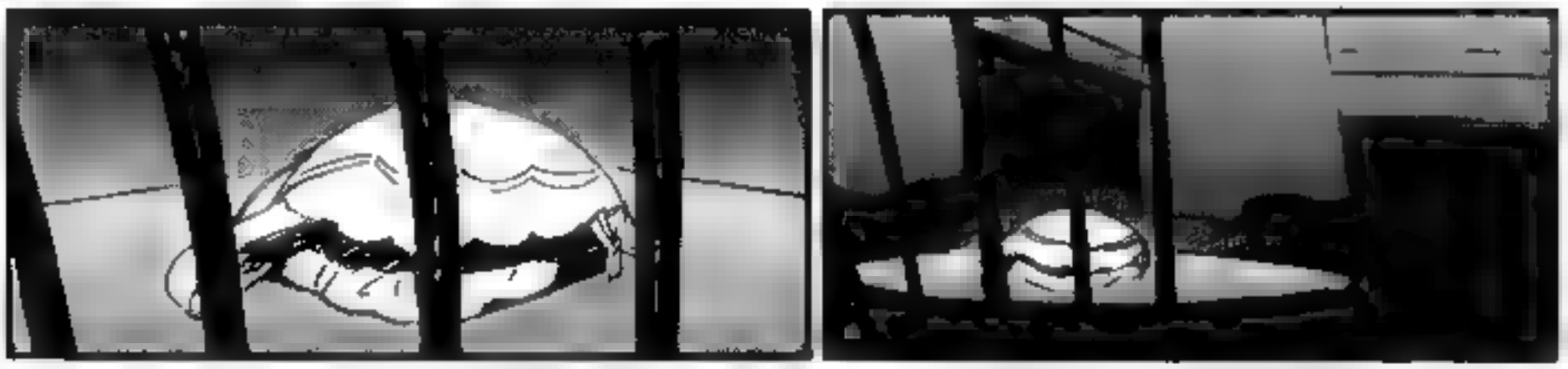
It seems... I had another dream

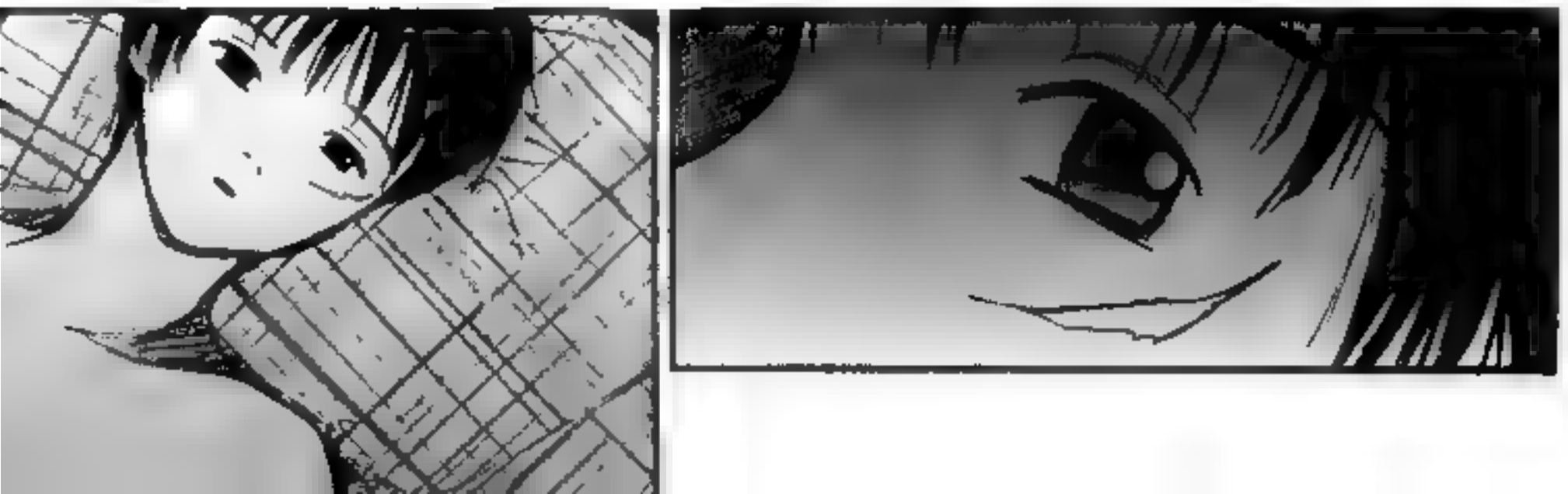


I wonder what kind of dream it was
I can't remember.

but I felt warm
and peaceful

and I cried





AI

MMM...

IT'S STILL DARK OUT..

DAWN HASN'T BROKEN YET.

MM..

YOU'RE AWAKE, AI?

Poof

fuuu~

.....

.....

I FEEL HOT.

REALLY HOT

YEAH...

AI, ARE YOU OKAY?

YOU'RE NOT IN PAIN OR ANYTHING, RIGHT?

...LIKE IKURU IS INSIDE OF ME...

FROM MY BELLY TO MY CHEST, ALL THE WAY TO MY FINGERTIPS, I'M FILLED WITH IKURU...♡♡

...FEELS WEIRD...

STARE

AND SEEING YOU THERE...

Heehee...
♡

IT'S SO ENTICING

COULD THAT BE PRIDE IN HER EXPRESSION?

OKAY,

HOW ABOUT SOME TEA?

IKURU IS POURING TEA NAKED...

Tee Hee

AH, IT'S COOLED OFF A BIT..

IKURU,

MY THROAT IS DRY...

HEH HEH

IS IT THAT FUNNY?

SLURP

SLURP

DELI-CIOUS!

PUAH!

HAH HAA-

SIP SIP SIP

GLUB GLUB

OK!

ANOTHER CUP?

chu-♡

nee

nee

AH-

CHU-!

nee

nee

nee

AAAI--♡

OUTSIDE THE WINDOW... THE EARLY MORNING SKY, FALLING STARS, AND PITCH BLACK SEA STRETCHED INTO THE DISTANCE...

WE DRANK TWO CUPS OF THAT LUKEWARM TEA...

THE SMELL OF THE HIGH TIDE IN THE ROOM...

...WAS QUITE REFRESHING...

IKURU, I HAD A DREAM EARLIER...

WELL,

HMM,

A DREAM?

WHAT KIND OF DREAM?

IT WAS LIKE...

PLUNK

?

AI ROTATION!

Rolling

HO!

HEHE...

SMILE

AI...

A GOOD HUG...

...A GOOD DREAM.

HUG

HEY, IKURU...

AI WAS BORN TODAY...

IKURU GAVE BIRTH TO AI.

..SO AI CAN GIVE BIRTH TO IKURU AGAIN SOMETIME...

YOU WON'T BE AFRAID.

YOU WON'T BE LONELY ANYMORE...

The girl I loved smiled in the darkness...

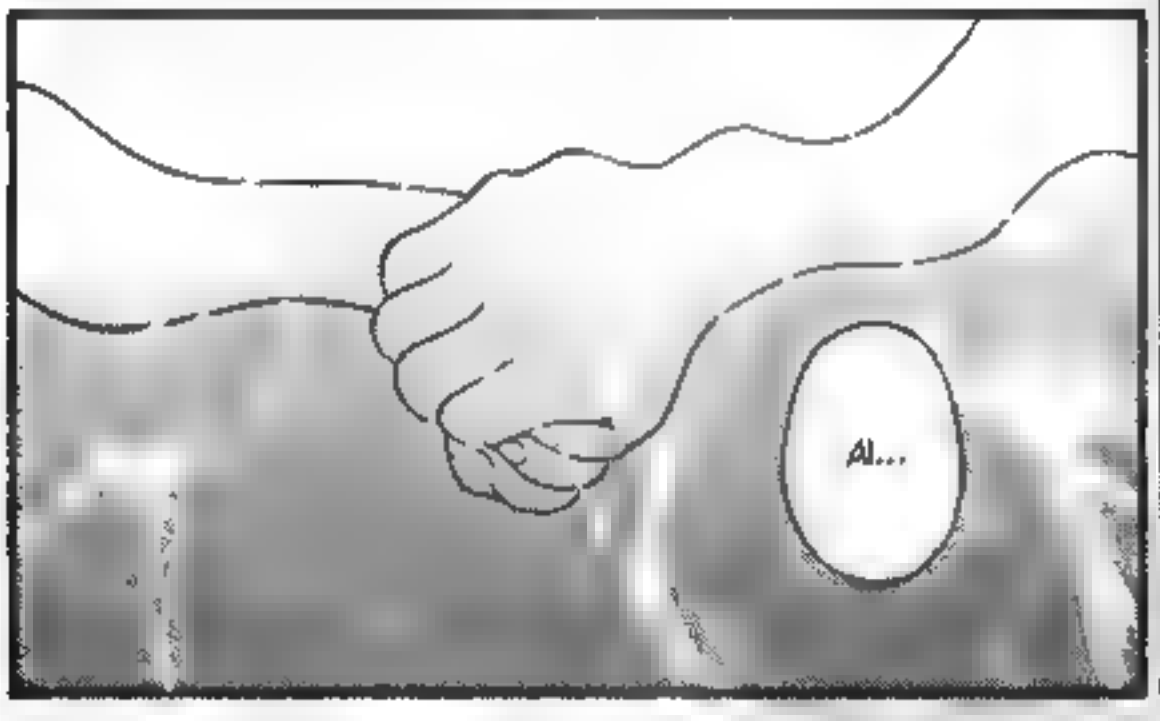
...a completely comforting smile.

YAA!
IT'S FREEZING!

OOH!
SPLASH
SPLASH
SPLASH!
HYOOO!

IKURU!
IKURU!
IKURU!

THE STARS ARE DISAPPEARING!



Isn't it beautiful

[ Chapter 39 / End ]

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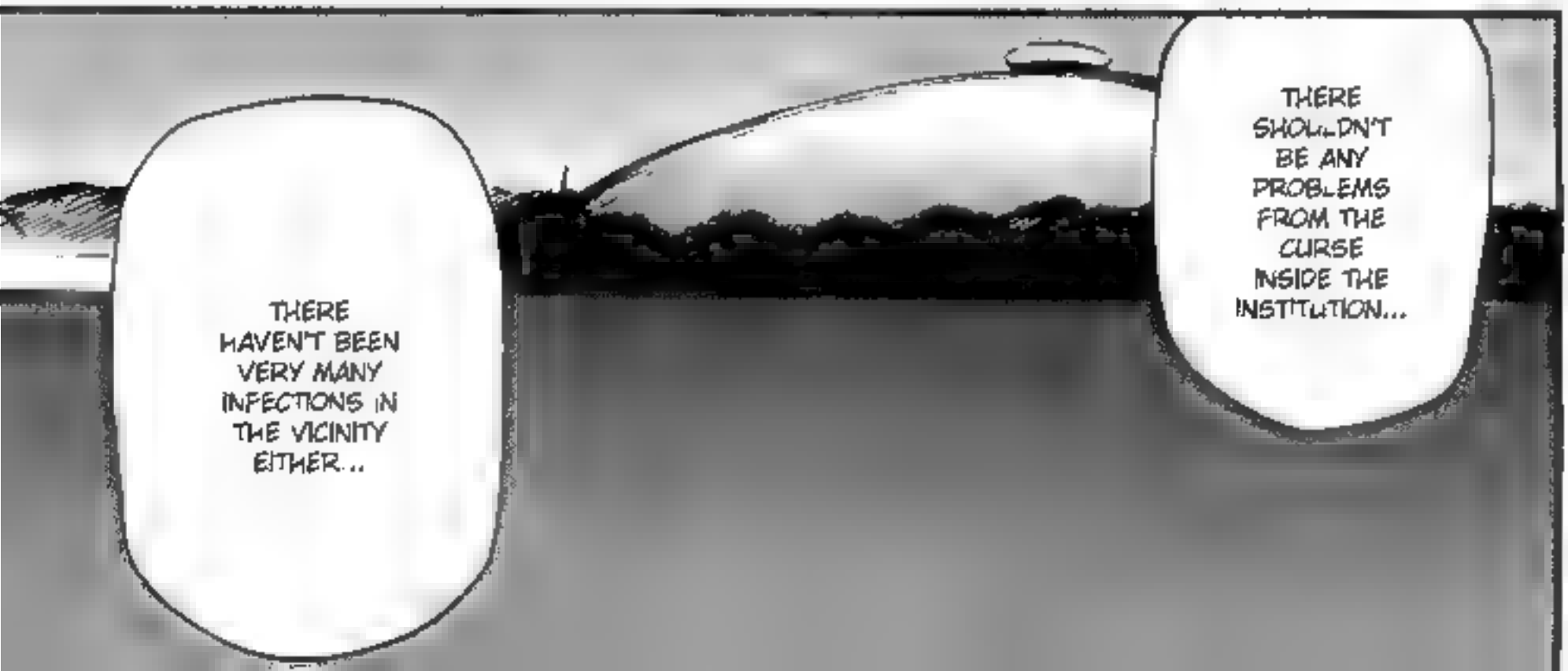
愛

[AI-REN]

人

# Chapter 40.

# Returning Home


THERE HAVEN'T BEEN VERY MANY INFECTIONS IN THE VICINITY EITHER...
THERE SHOULDN'T BE ANY PROBLEMS FROM THE CURSE INSIDE THE INSTITUTION...

YOU MANAGED TO STABILIZE THE DOCTOR FROM THE IASH WHO CAME IN FROM ANTARCTICA...

AND, FOR THE MOMENT, THERE SEEM TO BE NO PROBLEMS AT ALL...

SINCE THIS PLACE WAS ORIGINALLY A SPACE LAB, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO SUSTAIN OURSELVES IN TERMS OF FOOD, WATER, AND ENERGY.

AND MEDICINES CAN BE PREPARED EASILY ENOUGH...

WE SHOULD LAUNCH OURSELVES INTO ORBIT!

JUST SAY GOODBYE TO THE EARTH, THAT'D BE THE SAFEST BET!

I'M OPPOSED TO THAT IDEA.

WE'D BE NEGLECTING THE PLANET,

AND IT'S NOT LIKE WE CAN TAKE ALL THE ANIMALS WITH US..

HAHA

HEH-

HAHA-HA!

WEHE, GOOD IDEA...

BETTER THAN IF WE WERE CURSED...

I WONDER WHAT OUR LIFESTYLE WOULD BE LIKE..?

IF THOSE OF US HERE MANAGED TO SURVIVE THE END OF THE WORLD,

AHAHA!

BITE

HAHA-HA!

Since the curse is hidden by the night,
the day will remain peaceful forever...

So peaceful...

WHAT ABOUT YOSHIZUMI IKURU-KUN?

...

SENSEI!

GOOD WORK, NIGHT SHIFT!

WELL THEN, LET'S GET TO WORK!

THERE WASN'T ANY REASON NOT TO.

I APPROVED HIS RETURN.

OH.

HE PACKED UP HIS BELONGINGS AND RETURNED HOME.

STEP

HIS CONDITION IS DETERIOR-RATING QUITE A BIT,

IS IT OKAY FOR HIM TO GO BACK?

O-OH..

STEP

AND..

STEP

...BEING ALONE

PU

WHAT'S ALL THIS CURSE NONSENSE ..?

I DON'T SEE WHAT THE BIG DEAL IS,

OR WHY THEY WANT TO DISTURB OUR LIVES.

PU

LOOKS LIKE THE WEATHER IS NICE AGAIN TODAY...

EAT UP... ♡

HERE YOU GO.

THERE, THERE ...

SUCK SUCK

BUT YOU KNOW,

AFTER *THAT* HAPPENED.

DON'T START THINKING LIKE THAT...

YEAH.

IKURU-KUN LEFT THIS MORNING, DIDN'T HE?

I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM CRY, NOT EVEN ONCE. .

HE SEEMED STRANGE.

PUH

WE MAY NEVER SEE HIM AGAIN..

DO YOU THINK HE'S OKAY?

HE DID SEEM RATHER STRANGE...

.....

.....

ROLL

ROLL

ROLL

HEY, OLD MAN...

DON'T CALL ME "OLD MAN."

HEY, OLD MAN.

AND WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOU DIE?

DO YOU TURN INTO A GHOST? OR DO YOU GO TO HEAVEN?

...DIE?

OLD MAN,

WHY MUST EVERYONE.

AT TIMES LIKE THIS,

EVEN I WONDER ABOUT THAT

.....

...IF WE WENT TO HEAVEN...

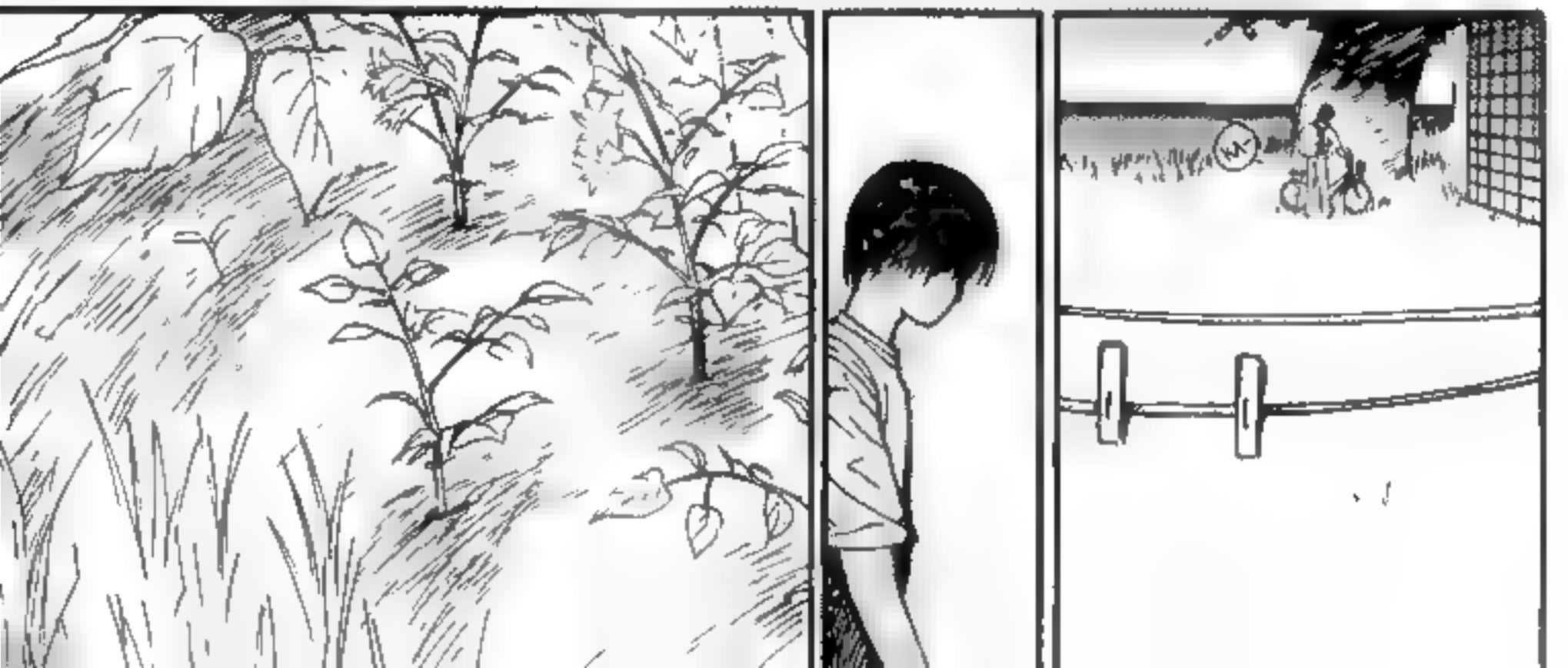
IT'D BE NICE.

I TRULY HOPE SO,

FOR HER SAKE, AT LEAST...

CLACK

KU


WA

エリル あ!!

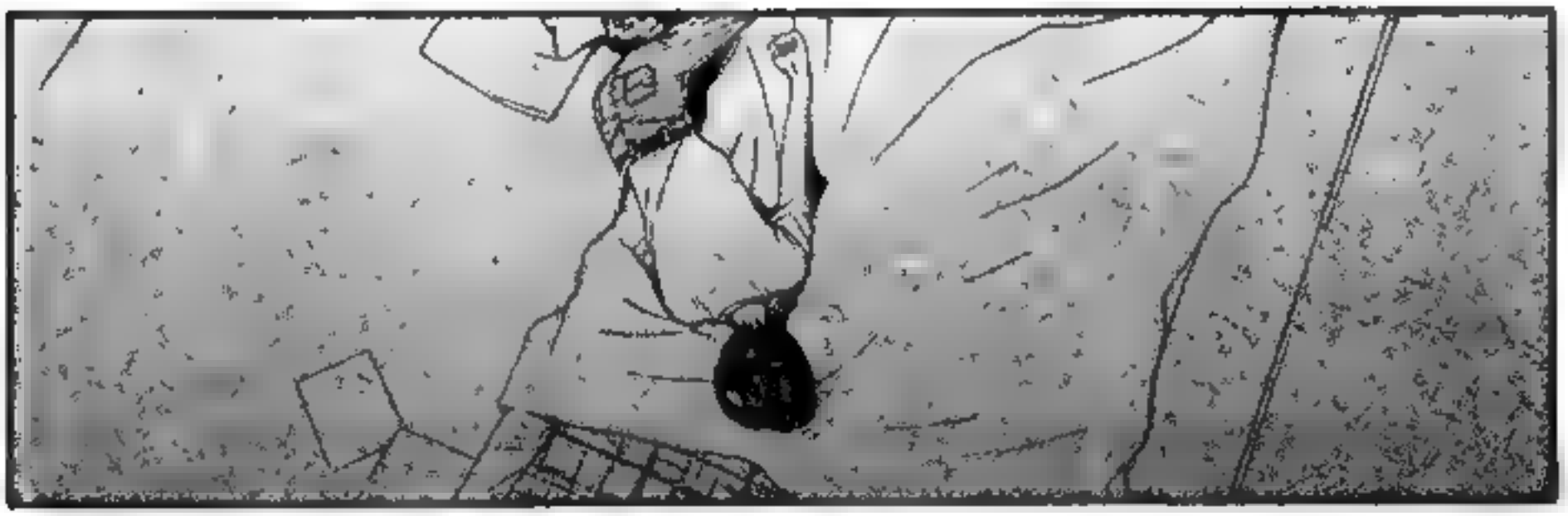
エリル あ!!

BAN

PICTURES IKURU AI

POOF

Aí...



-ON-

Ikuru!

Ikuru!

Wait a minute, Ai!

Um... the video-tape!

Ok!

Run! Run!

It's so embarassing, like a commemorative photo...

Yep!

Are we posing?

This is where Ikuru and Ai lived...

This is our house

deeply cherished each other,

and we were really, really in love

Both Ikuru and Ai

We loved each other more than anything in the world!

We loved each other more than anything in the world

[ Chapter 40 / End ]

# 愛人 [AI-REN]

Chapter 40.5

See You Tomorrow

AI WAS THE ONE WHO SUGGESTED THAT WE MAKE THESE VIDEOS

WE'RE COPYING WHAT THEY DID

MY PARENTS HAD MADE ONE BEFORE I WAS BORN

REC

TAA! ♡

SO.

IKURU! NEXT IS OVER HERE!

STEP

WHAT'S ALL RIGHT?

nod

ALL RIGHT! PERFECT!

P1

We loved each other more than anything in the world! ♡

..WE COULD LEAVE IT AS A MEMENTO TO OUR CHILD.

WE WERE, ONLY PRETENDING

NOT FOR REAL, OF COURSE.

AI WAS VERY OPEN,

IKURU...

H-HI...

IKURU, YOU'RE SO STIFF!

RELAX!

HI..

TO BE HONEST, I FELT NERVOUS AND FLUSTERED

BUT AI WAS DIFFERENT

I'M NOT SURE I CAN..

YOU NEED TO SHOW THE DIGNITY OF A FATHER!

I HADN'T SEEN MYSELF IN THIS VIDEO BEFORE. BUT MY FACE SEEMED PROUD AND HAPPY...

HI.

SO, I GRADUALLY...

AHEM

..AS IF IT WERE FIXED WITH A PERMANENT SMILE ..

AND AI'S SMILING FACE, GAZING AT THE CAMERA, SEEMED HAPPY AND BRIGHT

BAH-

WE SPENT THAT ENTIRE DAY DOING SO

WE TOOK PHOTOGRAPHS ALL AROUND OUR HOUSE.

strum

CLANG

YAH!

HUP!

THUD

WE TOOK THE CAMERA TO THE INSTI-TUTE AS WELL.

THIS IS WHERE AI AND I WORKED..

THE KIDS OF THE INSTITUTE.

OUR JOB WAS TO CLEAN UP THE P PEE, POOP, AND DROOL..

THERE WAS SOMETHING SPLENDID ABOUT IT

DESPITE ALL THAT,

WHILE WORKING, A. AND I..

AROUND ME, THE KIDS WERE ALWAYS AFRAID..

WE WERE LIKE DIFFERENT PEOPLE COMPARED TO WHEN WE WERE ALONE ..

AROUND AI, THEY WERE ALWAYS SMILING ..

I REALLY ADMIRED A....

BZZ—

BZZ—

IT WAS EXHAUSTING WORK .

AH, KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK, HUS-BAND!

OK...

WAVE

WAVE

TO THEM, I WAS KNOWN AS "AI S HUSBAND. "

YOU'RE POPU-LAR!

HUS-BAND! HUS-BAND!

A-AI!

WALKING IN THE SUMMER GRASS

THE ORPHANS, THE SICK, AND THE INJURED ALL WALKED TOGETHER WITH AI AND ME

TODAY IS A TRIP.

TO THE SEA!

UMM. THIS IS FOR YOU.

THUMP THUMP

A GIFT

HUS-BAND!

IKURU-KUN. WAIT THERE.

OKAY-

HUH?

TWEEEET!

GATHER AROUND!

SPLASH
SPLASH

ZZZ

WAH!

IT'S THE SEA!

splish
splish

LOOK! A CAMERA!

LINE UP! LINE UP!

YOU TWO GET IN THERE TOGETHER! ♡

AI-CHAN!

COME HERE!

I'LL TAKE ONE OF IKURU-KUN NEXT!

Hang in there

HUSBAND! HUSBAND!

AI!

Get closer together!

LOOK OVER HERE!

Husband!

AI!

AI!

This trip...

...became our honeymoon...

BYE BYE!

SEE YOU LATER!

BYE BYE!

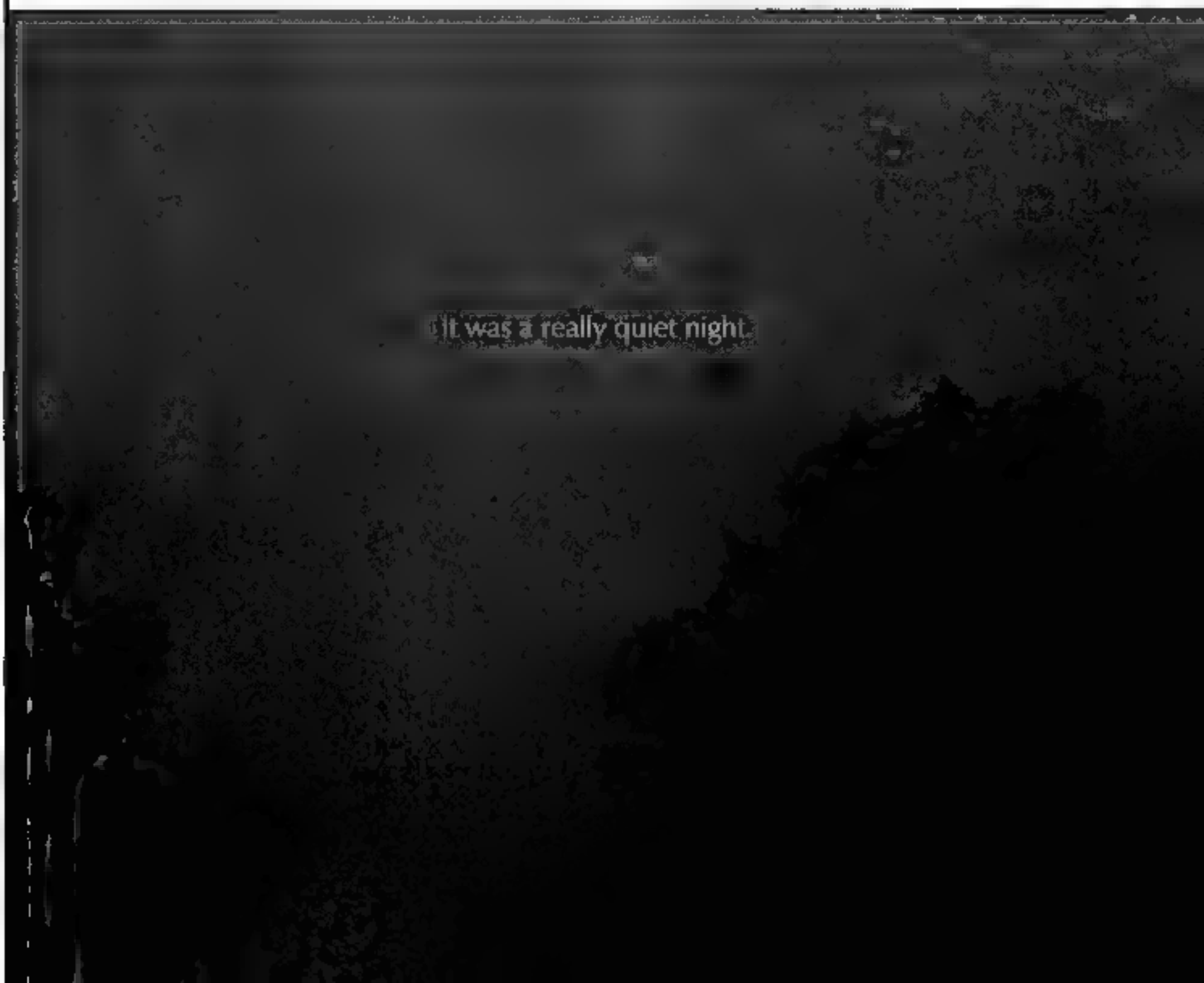
puh

IKURU...

Pudding

Clang

I wish I had let her have one spoonful..



FOR SOME REASON, SHE WAS SITTING VERY FORMALLY...

WHEN I CAME INTO THE ROOM AFTER PREPARING FOR BED, AI WAS WRITING IN HER DIARY.

THE ONLY SOUND IN THE ROOM WAS THE SCRATCHING OF HER COLORED PENCILS..

I PASSED THE TIME BY INSERTING MY IV AND TAKING MY MEDICINE...

THE ATMOSPHERE MADE IT DIFFICULT TO SPEAK.

SHE DIDN'T EVEN LOOK OVER AS I WATCHED HER..

..WAS BURNED INTO MY HEART.

THAT IMAGE OF AI'S BACK.

That image of Ai's back

was truly satisfying

I was truly
happy then...

THEN FOR SOME REASON, SHE TOOK TWO OR THREE MINUTES LONGER THAN USUAL..

..FINALLY TOOK HER DIARY,

AI..

PUT IT IN A BOX,

AND CLOSED THE LID

CLICK

..BEFORE COMING OVER TO THE FUTON.

beep

WE HAVE THE DAY OFF TOMORROW, SO DO YOU WANNA SLEEP IN?

Poof-

YEAH.

SHOULD I TURN OFF THE LIGHT?

OKAY.

YAWN

THEN, SHE TOOK HER USUAL PLACE...

YEAH.

IKURU...

A KISS?

HM?

MM...

Chu-

YEAH,

GOOD NIGHT, AI...

SQUEEZE

GOOD NIGHT,

SEE YOU TOMORROW...

AS USUAL, A'S BREATH LULLED ME TO SLEEP..

BUT THE TOUTH WAS THAT I AND PROBABLY AI AS WELL

WAS NO LONGER AFRAID OF THE NIGHT

LIKE SOME REASSURANCE THAT SHE WOULD NOT LEAVE ME BEHIND IN THE NIGHT

DON'T TH NK. .

...THAT I FELT LONELY ..

I DON'T TH NK. .

THAT I SUFFERED ..

Ai...

TODAY,

LET'S SLEEP IN A BIT LONGER, OKAY?

We loved each other more than
anything in the world.

[ Chapter 40.5 / End ]

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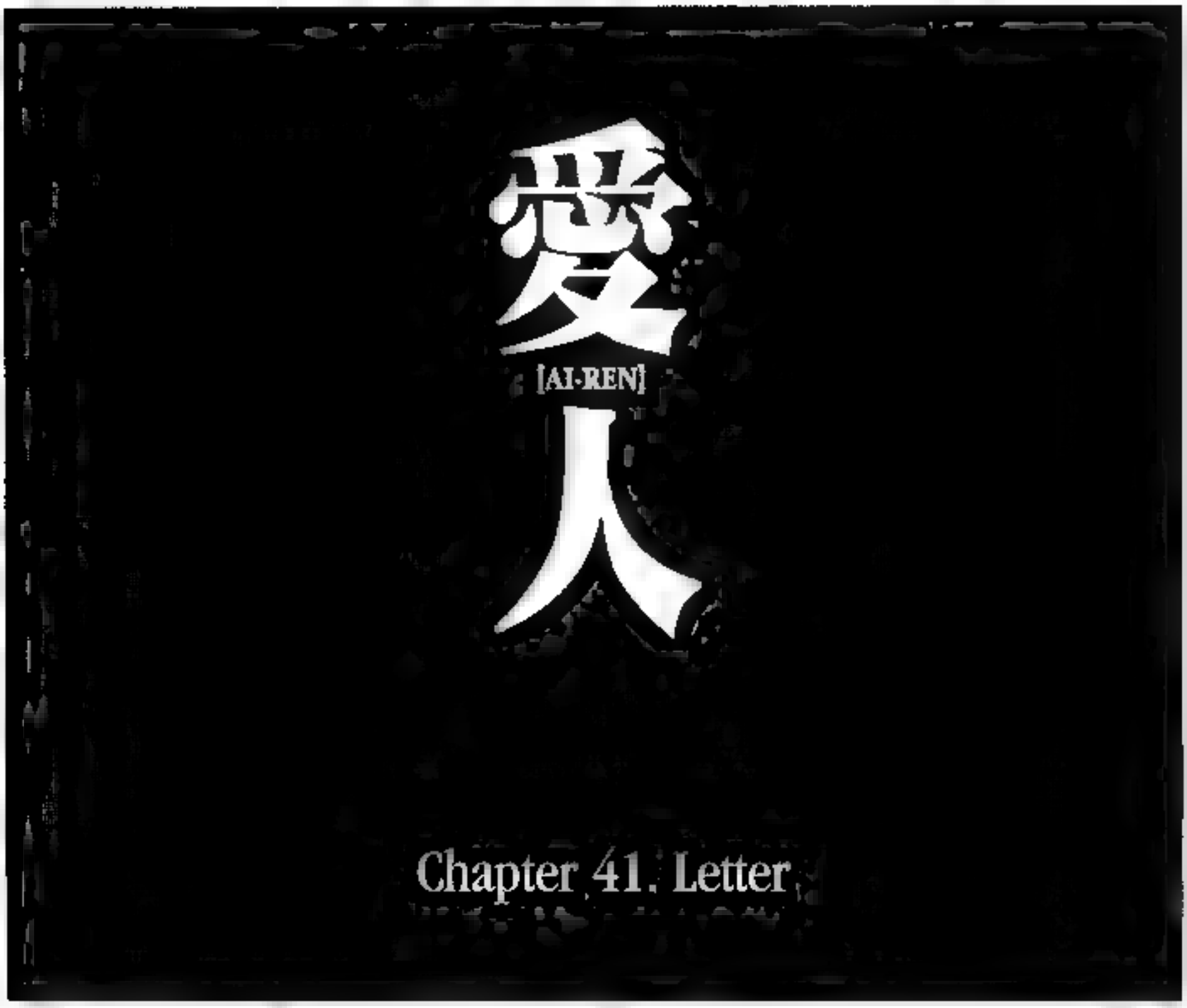
To Ai,
I'm writing a letter to you.
It's the first time I've ever written
a letter, so I'm a bit nervous.




# Chapter 41: Letter

After all this time, I'm finally returning home. It seems as though your beloved tomatoes are now growing wild. They're doing so well, despite having been left alone for a while...

One by one, little sprouts have sprung up, overflowing past the boundaries of our little garden...

You can even see the tiny little tomatoes growing on them...

I think that they'd be just fine, even without anyone's help...

I'm doing a pretty good job with the laundry, so there's no need to worry...

I've put all of your clothes in the closet...

I decided to use the fridge to store fertilizer...

Actually, the pudding I had made for you is in there, too...

...and that fertilizer, I'm going to give it to the tomatoes...

I decided to clean up the place...

SWEEP

This house is too big for just two people...

It took me all twelve days to clean up...

It was the first time that I had ever felt too sad to even cry...

I just couldn't do it. No matter how many times I felt down...

The only time I watched the video we made was on the first night.

On the second night, I thought I heard your voice amongst the sounds of the ocean, and smelled your scent in the breeze...

I cried with all the love I had for you...

As you played each day, you became more and more skilled...

...eventually surpassing my own abilities...

Finally, I polished that piano, the one you played every day, until it sparkled...

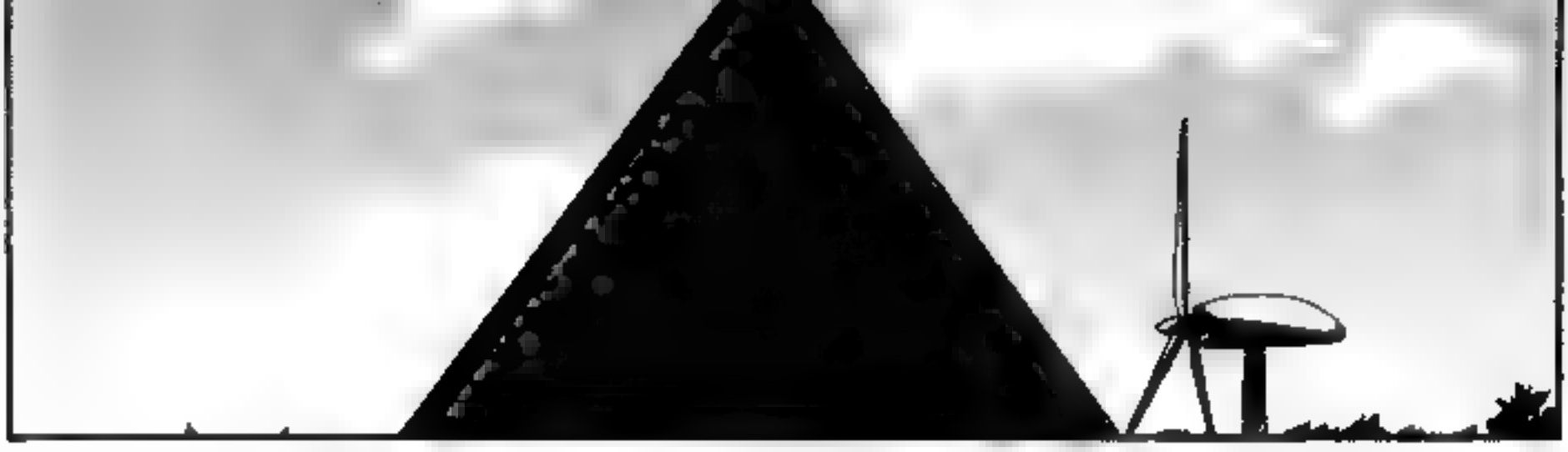
PON—

I really, truly loved the way you played...

CLICK

This is my farewell to
that house that we
lived in together...

I probably...
won't return to this
house anymore...



Well,

until the end,

I intend to make sure that the man you loved will not become someone pitied...

I'm going now, Ai...

Even though it was only for a short time, the kids at the institute clearly remembered you...

GOOD MORN-ING!

TUG

IT'S AI'S HUSBAND!

That poor guy from the Municipal Office was inconsolable...

I'm really glad...

...that we had the chance...

...to work together...

You were really popular...

The younger kids cried for you a lot...

Even now, everyone still loves you...

I still haven't mentioned the most important thing...

.....

This image on the monitor that looks like a distant star...

They took a molecule from your body,
converted it back into atoms...

There are many of them all over the world...

It's amazing! It's abolutely amazing!! Ai... Ai! Ai!!

THAT BABY BELONGS TO YOU AND AI.

THIS CHILD ...WILL LEAD A HEALTHY LIFE

Ai..! It's our child!

This is our baby..!!

NEITHER YOU NOR AI WAS AFFECTED BY THE CURSE.

AND IT'S NOT A COMMUNICABLE CONDITION...

That light has appeared in many of my dreams since then...

But I probably won't ever have a chance to hold this child...
It will be impossible for me to see this child's face....

I've been gradually getting worse...

My left arm is no good anymore;
I've been practicing with a prosthesis...

My vision has also gone bad...

THE OCEAN AND THE SKY
THAT BE IN MY GAZE AT
THESE THES

WILL BE THE LAST
LANDSCAPE THAT I SEE

I WON'T BE ABLE TO SEE ANYMORE, BUT IT'S OKAY I'VE BURNED THE IMAGE INTO MY MIND

It really was beautiful...

THAT EVENING, I WENT COMPLETELY BLIND.

YEAH

IT DOESN'T SEEM TO AGREE WITH ME

EVERYTHING SEEMS SO GLOOMY

BZZ

BZZZ

HOW'S THE SEEING AID?

SAME AS ALWAYS?

BZZ

THE WEATHER IS NICE TODAY ISN'T IT?

YES VERY

I MADE ONE LAST REQUEST..

A REQUEST TO HARUKA-SENSEI REGARDING OUR CHILD..

I'D BE HAPPY TO.

To Ai,
I will die soon...

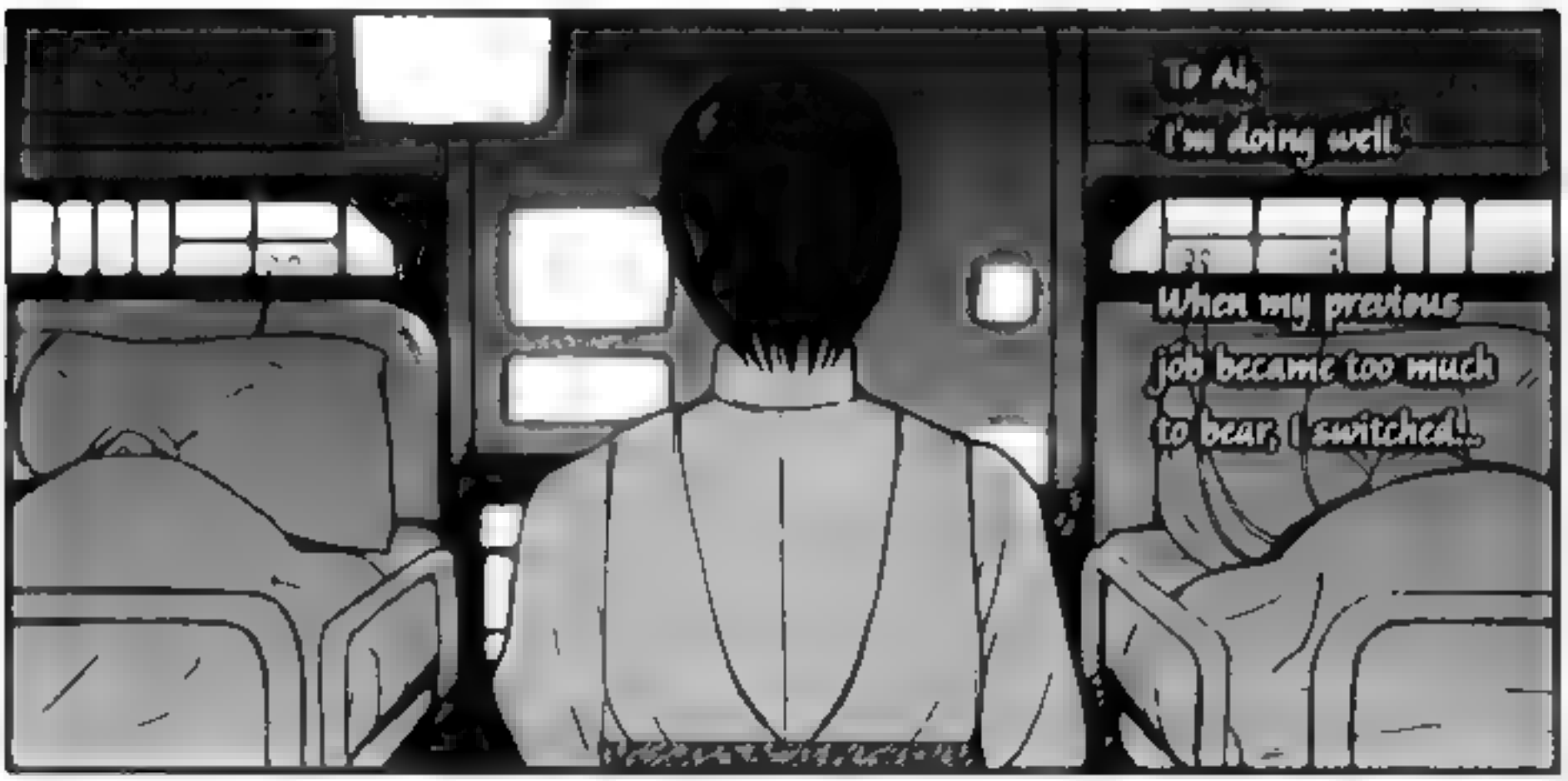
I don't know what happens
to people after they die...

Will I become a ghost and see you again..?
Or is this letter itself merely a fantasy...

I don't have faith in religion like people did long ago;
I know nothing of heaven...

But I think it must be a lot like the days I lived with you...

I'm sure of it.



...to the kids that are sick,
the kids that are frightened,
the kids who- like us, once-
haven't long to live.
What you did for me,
I intend to do for them.
I intend to do this until the end.

To Ai,

Thanks to you,
I can lead a happy life just doing this.

I can now say, from the bottom of my heart,
that I'm glad I was born.
I truly am glad to be alive.

To Ai,
To my beloved...

Your Lover,
Yoshizumi Ikuru

[ Chapter 41 / End ]

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愛人

[AI-REN]

Chapter 42.

# Yoshizumi Ikuru

HW

TSSS-

He... died.

[-Narration Nagi Haruka-]

HA-

His death came after some ten odd years
of suffering and struggle.
—It couldn't have been helped

I wasn't with him
when it happened.

He was born into a loving
environment

He was a loving person.

He thought of the world as
a beautiful place

and he had someone who
was irreplaceable to him.

I wasn't able to
comfort him

He
That boy whom I cherished

In this world overflowing
with violence,
savagery
cruelty.

was killed

No human can cheat death.
No human will ever cheat death.

But, there is nothing to do
except to struggle onwards.

Until the end.

There was no sign of the submarine's security forces.

I assume we are "safe" for the submarine's security guards.

You mustn't, my adorable Haruka...

...TO KILL THEM ALL...

...I HAD INTENDED.

MOTHER OR NAGI

HAA-

HACKED INTO THE SYSTEM AND DISABLED THE SECURITY.

...AND THAT WRETCHED REVOLT MADE ITS WAY INTO THE INSTITUTION.

IT WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS CHAOTIC RAMPAGE

IN AN INSTANT.

IDIOCY.

THERE WAS NO DISTINGUISHING VICTIM FROM ATTACKER... EVERYONE WAS BLOWN TO PIECES..

WE LATER DISCOVERED THAT IT WAS ALL AN ACT, FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES

IT WAS ALL FOR NOTHING...

NOTHING AT ALL...

THE MISSILE WAS FIRED BY THOSE CLAIMING "WE ARE THE ONLY ONES NOT CURSED."

AN OFFENSIVE BY NAGI AND THE ANTARCTIC TERRORISTS TO TEACH US A LESSON.

BOOM

. THE END OF YOSHIZUMI IKURU'S LIFE

THAT HIS INNOCENT LIFE WAS TAKEN
IN CIRCUMSTANCES UNRELATED TO HIM
MADE ME TREMBLE IN ANGER...

I CAN'T MOVE...

IT HURTS..!

OUCH!

OUCH!

OUCH!

OUCH!

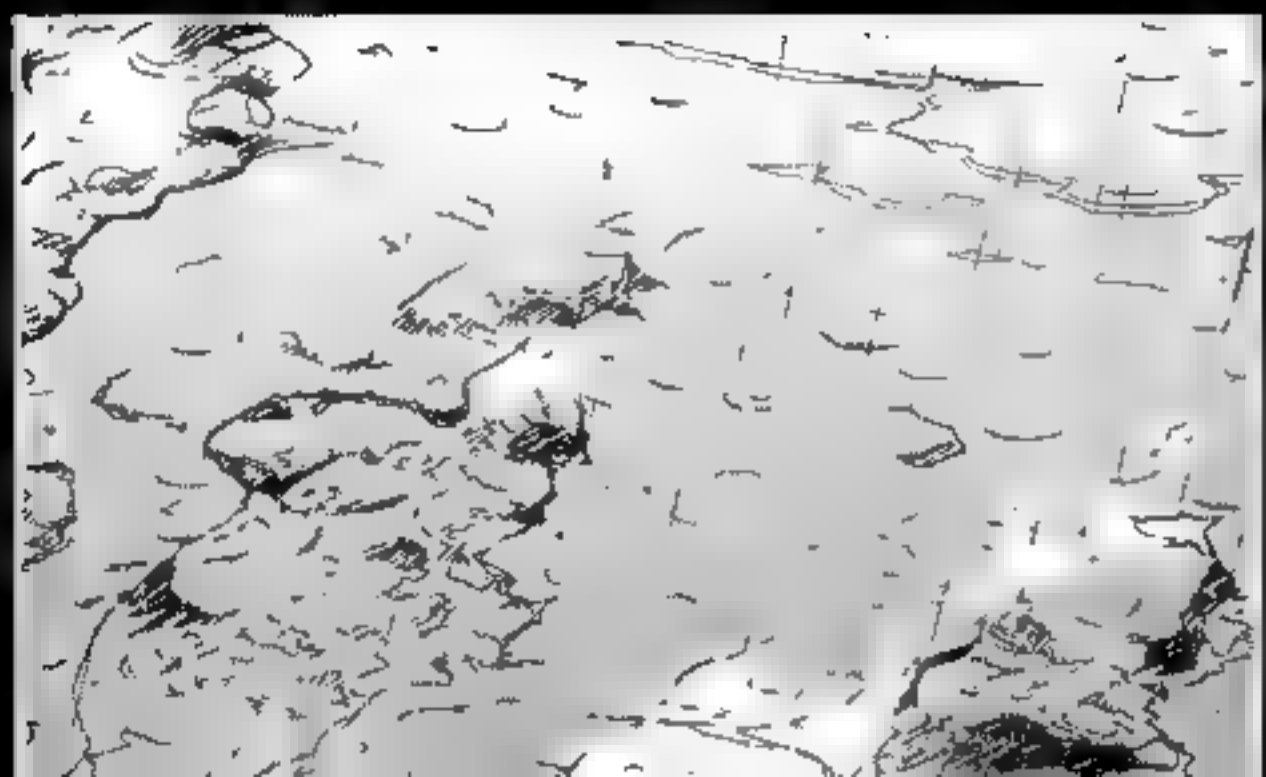
I'M DYING!!

HELP!

HELP!! HELP!!

SOMEBODY!

HELP-



ANYBODY?

IS SOMEONE THERE?
ANYONE?

I SENSE SOMEONE...
A KID..?

One of the cursed people who sought refuge here...

...NO RESPONSE.

I'M BLIND...

WHAT HAPPENED?

WHAT HAPPENED TO ME?!

I'M STUCK UNDER SOMETHING!

PULL ME OUT OF HERE!

CAN YOU HELP ME?

GRAB MY ARMS! GET ME OUT OF HERE!

...WHAT'S THAT?

I'm sorry.

It's already begun to collapse.

I'm cursed...

My body is already disfigured...
I'm bleeding internally.

I... can't be saved...

The virus is spreading...

I... am an angel of death...

WHAT IS IT..?

ARE YOU TRAPPED?

IF NOT, YOU SHOULD RUN AWAY BEFORE IT COLLAPSES...

I exist to take people's lives.

Anything else is beyond the bounds of my existence.

I won't forgive those who cherish life.

I HAVE HOPE...

I have no love for this world.

I have no hope for this world.

I HAVE HOPE FOR YOU...

EVEN IF YOU HAVE NO HOPE FOR THE WORLD...
EVEN IF YOU HAVE NO HOPE FOR THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE...

...I HAVE HOPE FOR YOU.

EVEN IF YOU TAKE THE LIVES
OF THE LIVING, I WON'T BE AFRAID.
I HAVE HOPE FOR YOU.

YOSHIZUMI IKURU,

I'M YOUR OPPOSITE.

GO!

Who are you?

EVEN IF YOU HAVE NO FORGIVENESS...

...THAT'S OKAY.

AFTER REGAINING HER COMPOSURE, SHE RETURNED...

SHE ASKED ME,

IT WASN'T THE SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS, BUT OF CRAWLING...

I FELT THE TREMBLING FIRST MOVEMENTS...

SHE WAS LEAVING...

IN AN UNBELIEVABLY TENDER VOICE,

Shall I stay with you?

Aren't you lonely?

NO, THAT'S NOT NECESSARY.

BECAUSE I HAD SOMEONE PRECIOUS TO ME...

BECAUSE I HAD SOMEONE WHOM I LOVED...

I'M OKAY...

I CAN DIE ALONE.

...THEN ONCE AGAIN DISAPPEARED INTO THE DISTANCE...

THAT PERSON, WHO I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW, GAVE ME A SOFT KISS...

THIS TIME, SHE DID NOT RETURN.

*IS THAT RAIN HITTING MY FACE?*

THE BLOOD THAT HAD BEEN FILLING MY LUNGS GUSHED UP MY THROAT...

*I'LL TAKE MY FINAL BREATH...*

A DROP OF RAIN FELL INTO MY MOUTH...

IT CLEANSED MY MOUTH, WHICH HAD BEEN CLOGGED WITH MUD AND BLOOD...

HAAAA-

THE COOL AIR...
THE WARMTH OF THE EARTH, BLOOD, AND FLESH...
THE SWEET SMELL OF BURNING...

A LITTLE LATER...

*I REALLY AM DYING...*
*I'M GOING TO DIE LIKE THIS...*

THAT BRIGHT LITTLE STAR-LIKE CHILD OF AI'S AND MINE...

WHAT ON EARTH HAPPENED?

DID IT ONLY HAPPEN HERE? IS EVERYONE ELSE SAFE?

IS IT SAFE? IS IT SAFE? IS IT SAFE?

SENSEI...
HARUKA SENSEI...

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GUIDANCE...
THANKS TO YOU, I WAS ABLE TO LIVE
A REAL LIFE...

SENSEI...
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

DESPITE THIS TERRIBLE WEATHER,
I FEEL LIKE SINGING...

THIS MUSIC..?

AHH, THAT'S AI PLAYING THE PIANO...

AI...

I'M COMING HOME NOW.

WILL YOU SAY "WELCOME HOME"
WITH A SMILE ON YOUR FACE?

AI...

I'M HAPPY...! I'M GONNA GIVE YOU A BIG HUG!

I'M GONNA KISS YOU 100 TIMES! NO, 1,000 TIMES!
FROM NOW ON, WE'LL BE TOGETHER FOREVER!

THINKING OF THAT FINAL SCENERY...

WELL,

The wind was blowing

**Nagi Haruka:** We excavated his body from under the rubble two days later. His face bore a miraculous expression.

**Interrogator:** Sensei, is that the truth about the world?
Living earnest, hard working lives.
Loving and being loved
Joy... and sadness...
Isn't it all just an illusion they've created for themselves?

**Nagi Haruka:** No, I saw it myself.
On his face was a smile with greater dignity than any king.

[ Chapter 42 / End ]

愛人

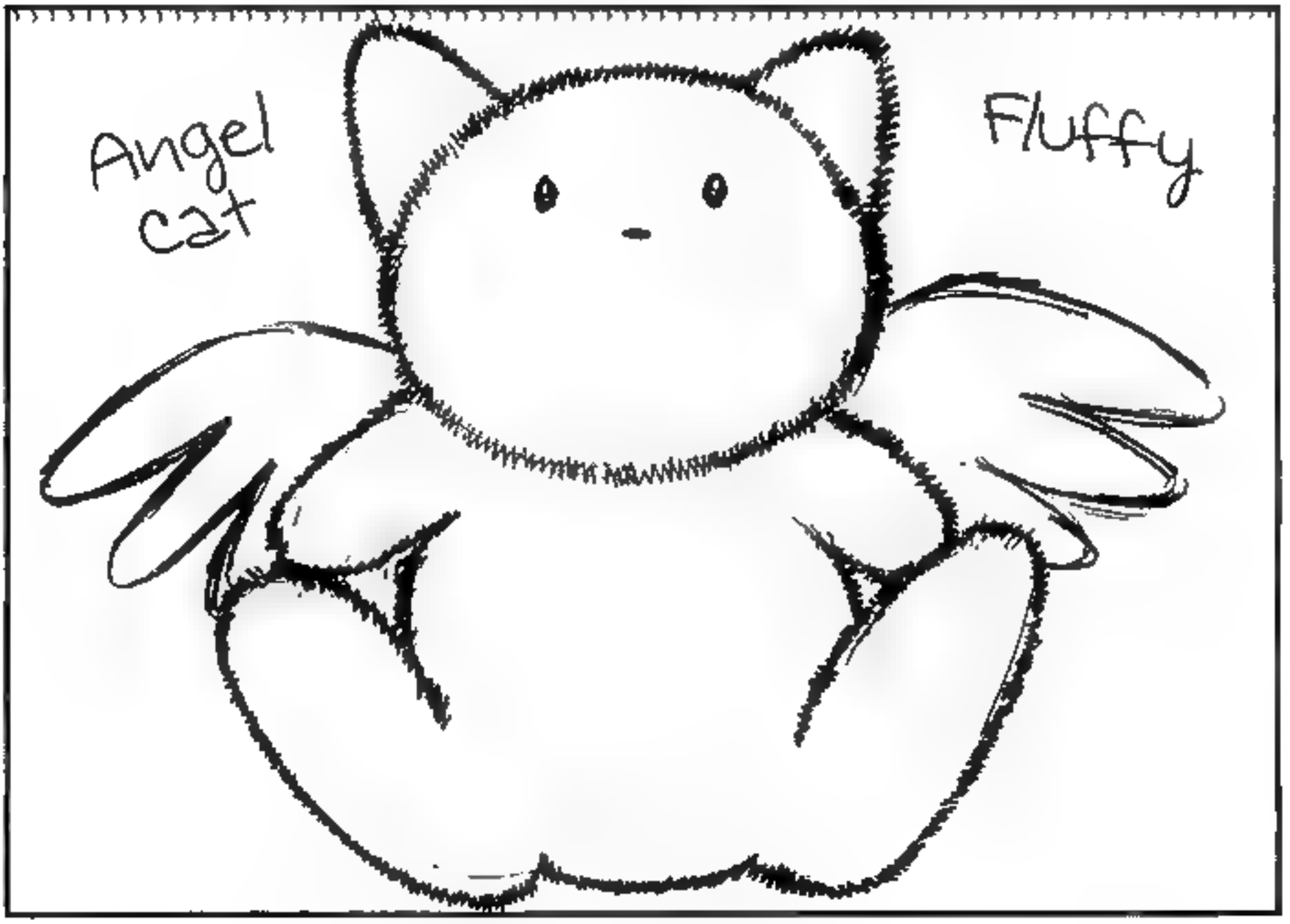
[AI-REN]

# Chapter 42.5

# Ai's Picture Diary III

~From the possessions of the late Yoshizumi Ikuru~

I'm glad to have been born.




It was really fun.

...lots of things that I love here...

I've found...

Pretty things, cute things, warm things...

Piano

Sparkling...

Long Lived Tomato II

Sparkling...

Ikuru...

Meeting you...

...made me happy...

So happy.

I loved that-♡

delicious!

Ikuru's cooking

I see Ikuru smile while I eat

sparkle sparkle

Tamago yaki

Break-fast

Ikuru's hands are thin and large
They're so cool!
I love them

*Living with you...*

*Being loved by you...*

*Loving you...*

I was happy.

*Ikuru, I will probably go before you do...*

*I have a feeling...*

That's why I've decided to draw
as much of the world we saw together
as I can.

That way, I won't disappear completely.

Round, round moon

Ikuru and I on the roof

You will live on.

Rain has come here, but it's clearing up somewhere else

Ikuru...

It was pretty, wasn't it?

Ikuru and Ai were here-

Ikuru,

if your final moments...

...should be painful or bloody...

Even if you're all alone...

Don't be afraid...

It'll be alright.

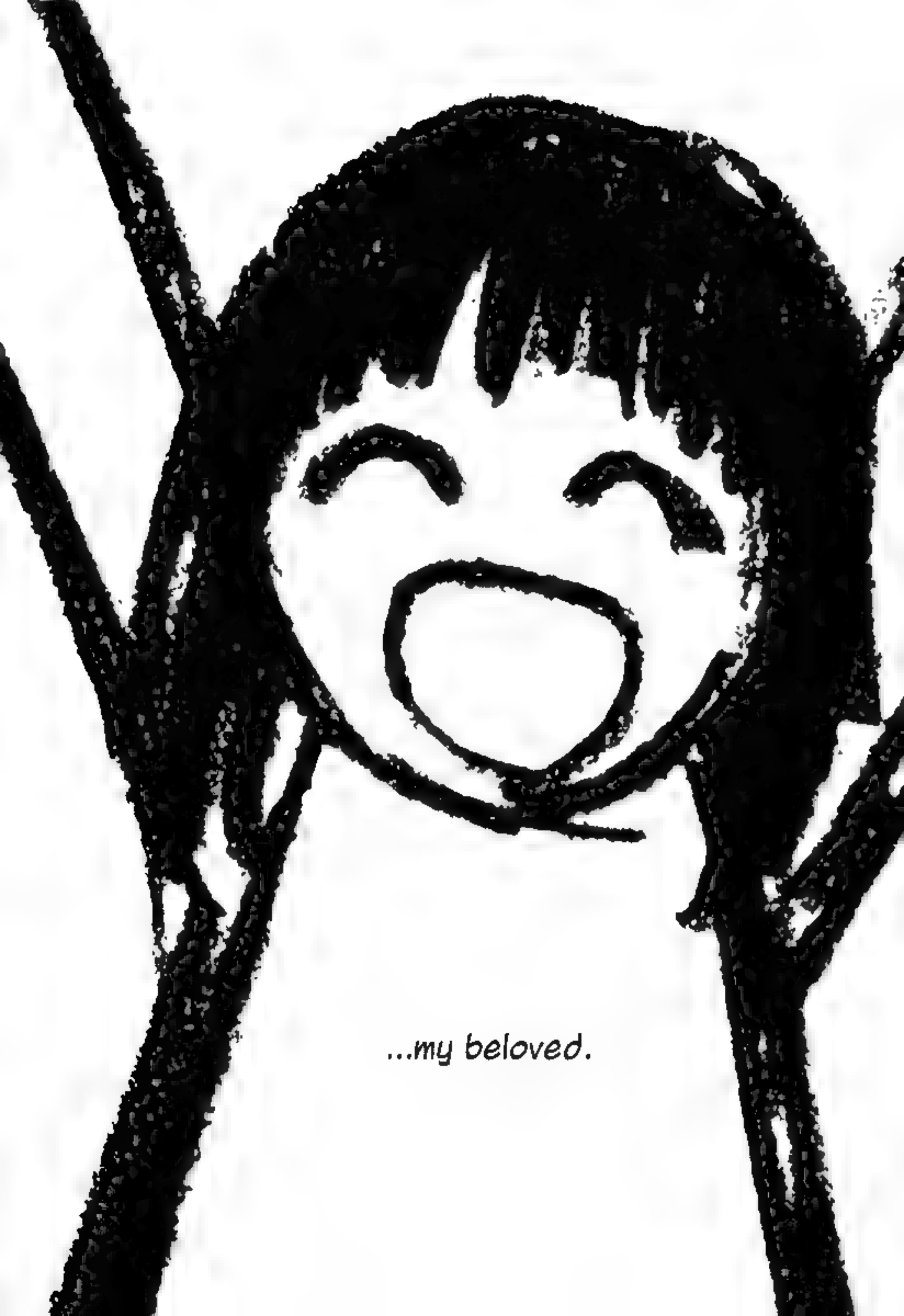
No matter what, your Ai-Ren will be here waiting for you...

I will definitely...

...waiting to say "Welcome Home!"

...be here waiting for you.

So, it'll be all right...



...my beloved.

You don't have to rush.
Just take your time.

Aaah..!!
But-

It doesn't matter how many
hundreds or thousands of years,
I'll always be waiting...

I don't mind
waiting...

I won't be lonely.

It's okay.

While Ai is here
waiting for you,

I'll be here dreaming...

...with lots of stars-♡

Smiling while dreaming...

Waiting for you,
whom I love.

Ikuru,

Ai...

...won't
disappear.

I'm looking
forward to
that day...

...the day when I'll
see you again.

[ Chapter 425 / End ]

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# Chapter 43.

## Returning With You On That Spring Day

愛

[AI-REN]

人

KURU-KUN, IT'S BEEN
A WHILE ..

IT'S GOING
HERE NOW

CHIRP
CHIRP

CHIRP

SPRING HAS ARRIVED IN FORCE

THOUGH THE WORLD IS OVERFLOWING WITH MISERY AND THIS CURSE

THIS S THE WORLD WITHOUT YOU.

.. THE WORLD WHERE THOSE WHO KILLED YOu LIVE ..

AND YET .

Ahhh...

.. IT'S VERY PRETTY.

IKURU-KUN...

THAT CHILD HAS GROWN QUITE BIG...

THAT DAY

THE RING THAT SNATCHED YOUNG LIFE AWAY

VIOLENCE

VIOLENCE

VIOLENCE

THAT TIME,

...CURSED EVERYTHING IN THIS WORLD...

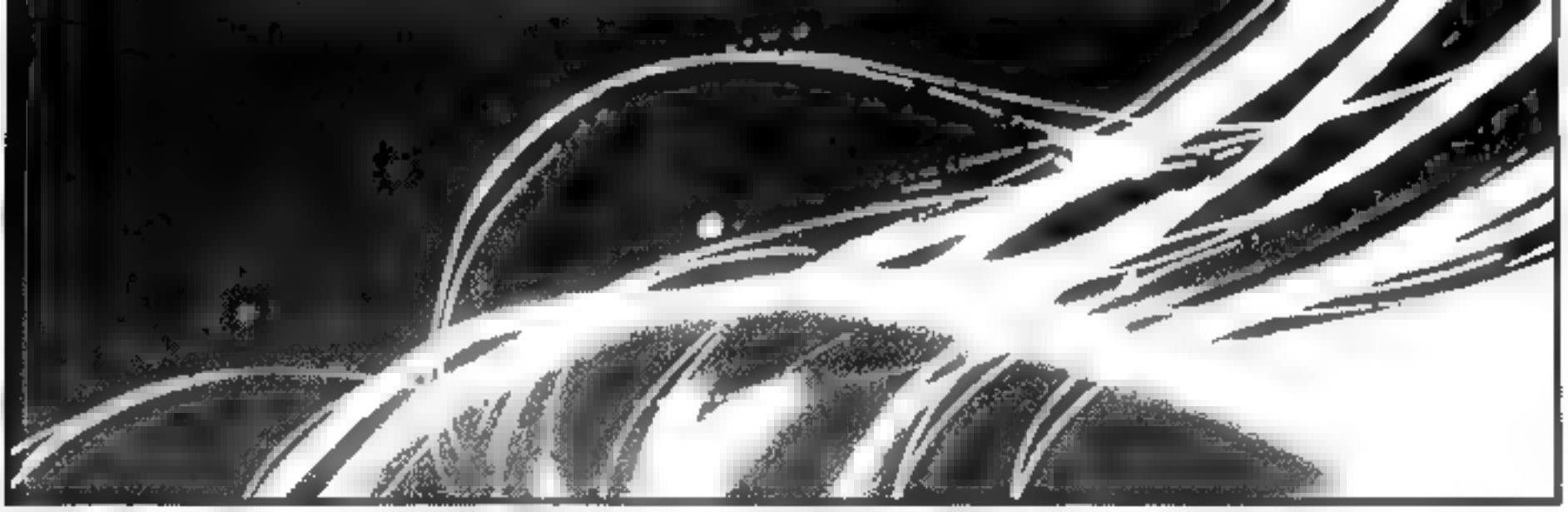
I WAS PROTECTING THAT CHILD. THE ARTIFICIAL WOMB WAS DESTROYED

EVEN THOUGH

THAT TINY LIFE THAT HAD YET TO TAKE THE SHAPE OF A HUMAN BEING

DISAPPEARED BEFORE MY EYES.

I CRIED WITH EVERYTHING I HAD



ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING
ALL BURST OUT IN THAT INSTANT

Come with me,

precious
child..!

Live!

IT WAS PITIFUL. .
JUST THINKING OF
THAT CHILD COULD
BRING A SMILE TO
MY FACE .

THAT UNBEARABLY .
UNBEARABLY CUTE

CONTINUING
TO SLEEP
FOREVER .

NEVER HAVING OPENED HER EYES EVEN ONCE .

I REMEMBER PRAYING..

..THAT ON SOME SPRING DAY,

I COULD TAKE THAT CHILD HERE TO SEE THE FLOWERS .

WE WOULD DEFINITELY COME.

THAT WAS MY FANTASY

IKURU-KUN WOULD DEFINITELY RETURN ALONG THIS SUMMER ROAD.

...TO THIS HOUSE, WHERE YOUR BELOVED WAITED...

YOU WOULD GREET
YOUR PRECIOUS GIRL
WITH A BIG SMILE.

"YOU'VE HAD A HARD DAY."

SHE WOULD SAY

AND THEN THE TWO OF YOU

WOULD ALWAYS

...WOULD ALWAYS LIVE HAPPILY TOGETHER.

THAT WAS MY FANTASY.

I WON'T LET YOU BE ERASED.

NO MATTER WHAT ACTS OF VIOLENCE MAY OCCUR, YOU WON'T BE ERASED.

NOR THE ONES YOU'VE LEFT BEHIND.

YOUR LIFE WILL CONTINUE ON LIKE THAT..

AND ME?

I'M FINE

ACTUALLY, I SEEM TO HAVE AGED A LOT LATELY

EVEN SOMETHING LIKE A SIMPLE COLD HITS ME PRETTY HARD.

THE IMMORTAL SIXES IS CLOSING SHOP

I'M BECOMING A LITTLE WRINKLED OLD LADY.

IT SEEMS LIKE MY LIFE WILL BE PASSED ON TO THAT CHILD

IT IS NOT ARROGANCE THAT
I FEEL THIS WAY .

. BUT THAT I GAVE
BIRTH TO THE CHILD
OF THE ONE I LOVE .

I WAS ABLE
TO GIVE LIFE TO
SOMEONE .

THANK YOU,

AI.

CLICK

HAAH

HAA

HUU

She's awake!

She's awake!

AH!

SENSEI IS BACK!

YOU MADE IT JUST IN TIME!

ZZ

PUFF

WHEEZE

LOOK AT THE BRAIN WAVES!

IT'S NEVER BEEN LIKE THIS BEFORE!

TH. THIS.

SHOULD I SWITCH IT TO AWAKENING MODE?

YES

SHE'S WAKING UP!!

BLOOD PRESSURE IS ABOVE 100 !

TEMP 35.6°C

PULSE 50,

HER CHEEKS ARE FLUSHED

C

C.

CARE-FULLY

BE CAREFUL NOT TO CAUSE ANY DAMAGE

YES-

PLEASE

SHIVER

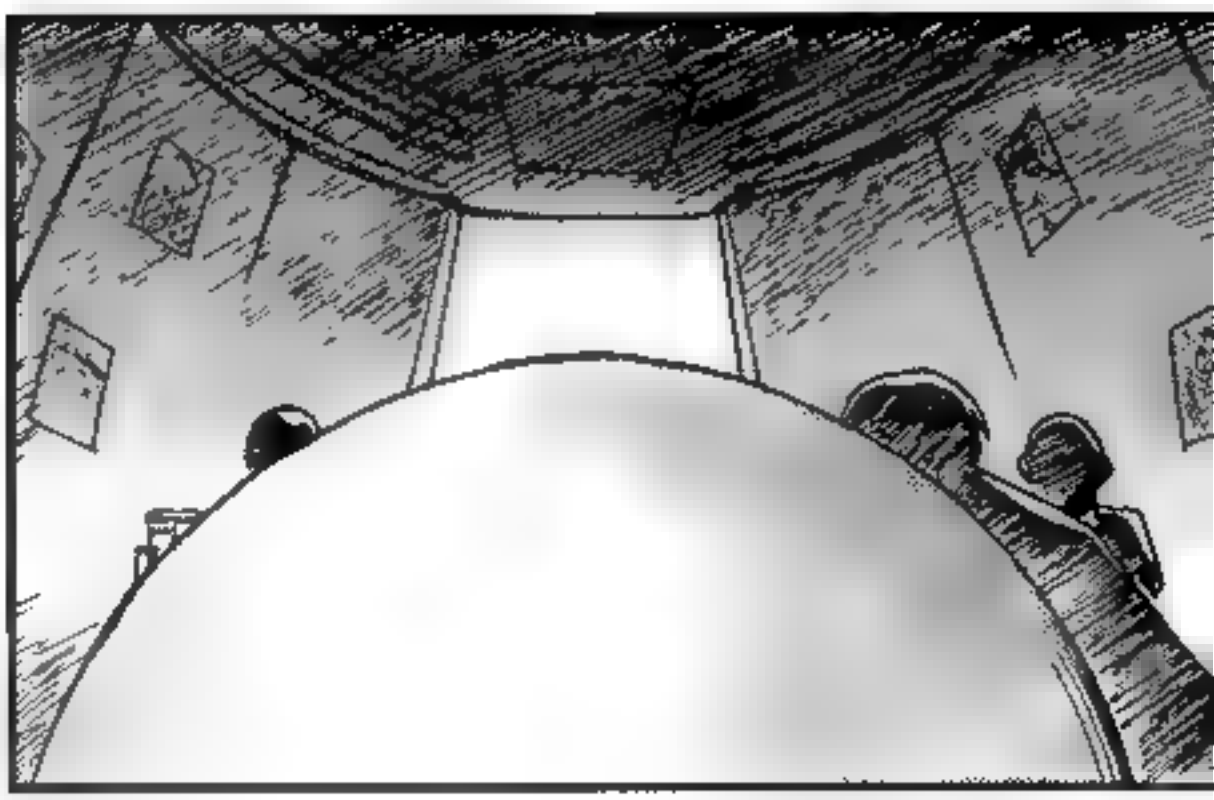
SHIVER

PLEASE-

It's cold...

Bright...

Noisy...



What is this?

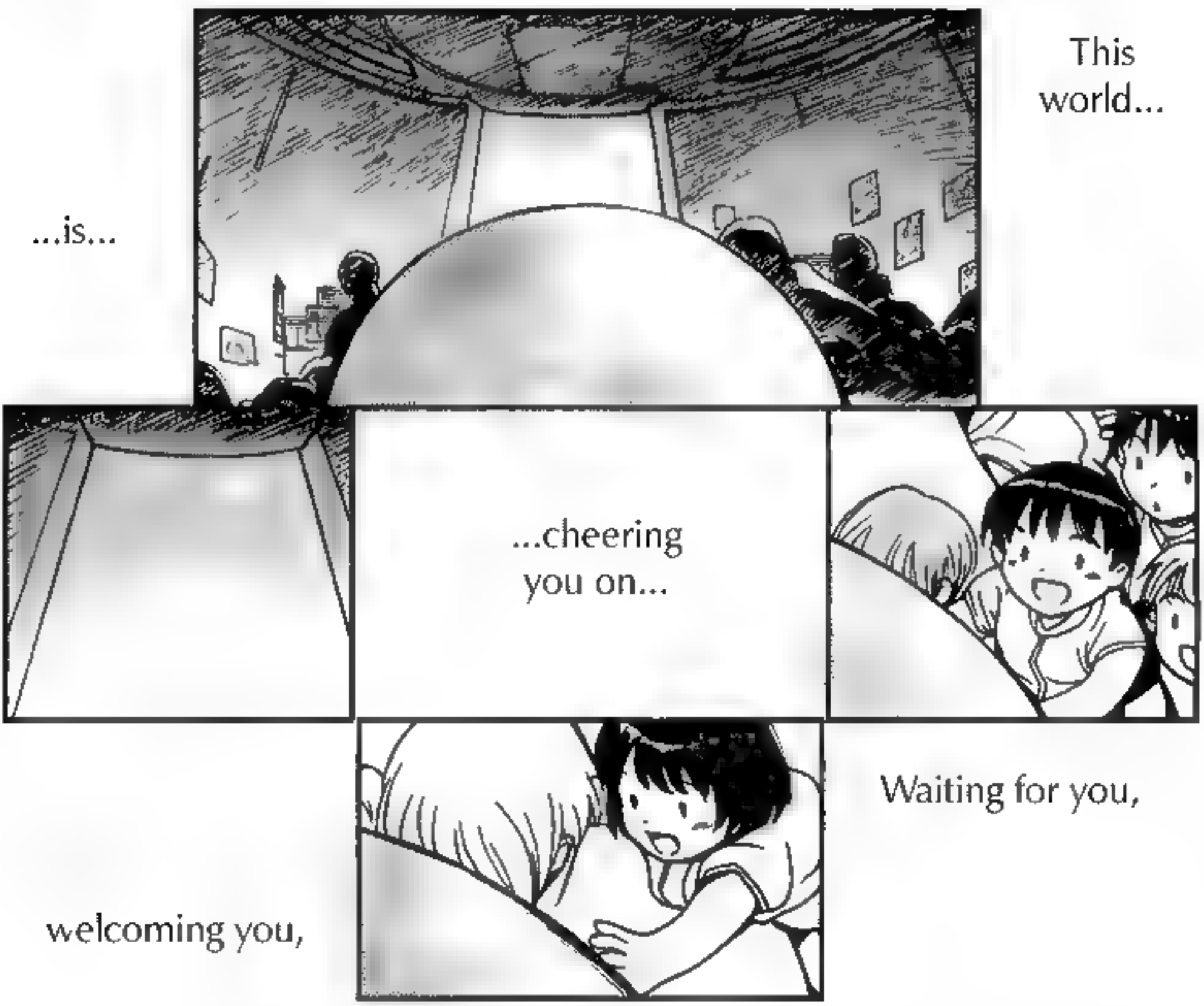
I'm scared...

I'm scared...

It's okay...

Don't be afraid...

...is...



This world...

...cheering you on...

Waiting for you,

welcoming you,

Listen carefully.

What are those
opening the door for you
saying?

What are they
saying to you?

Be brave, and
open your eyes.

There are many
people...

...and a beautiful
world waiting to
greet you.

The future, from
here on out..

There will be times
when you may feel small
or unattractive

times when the
world may seem as
cold as stone

..times so painful that
you can't even cry

But, don't be afraid

That's how it's
supposed to be

There's nothing to
be afra d of

Don't forget,

Right now,

...is blessing you...

everything in this world...

...with their entire body and soul..!!

Don't forget,

You are irreplaceable.
You were born out of love.

HA-

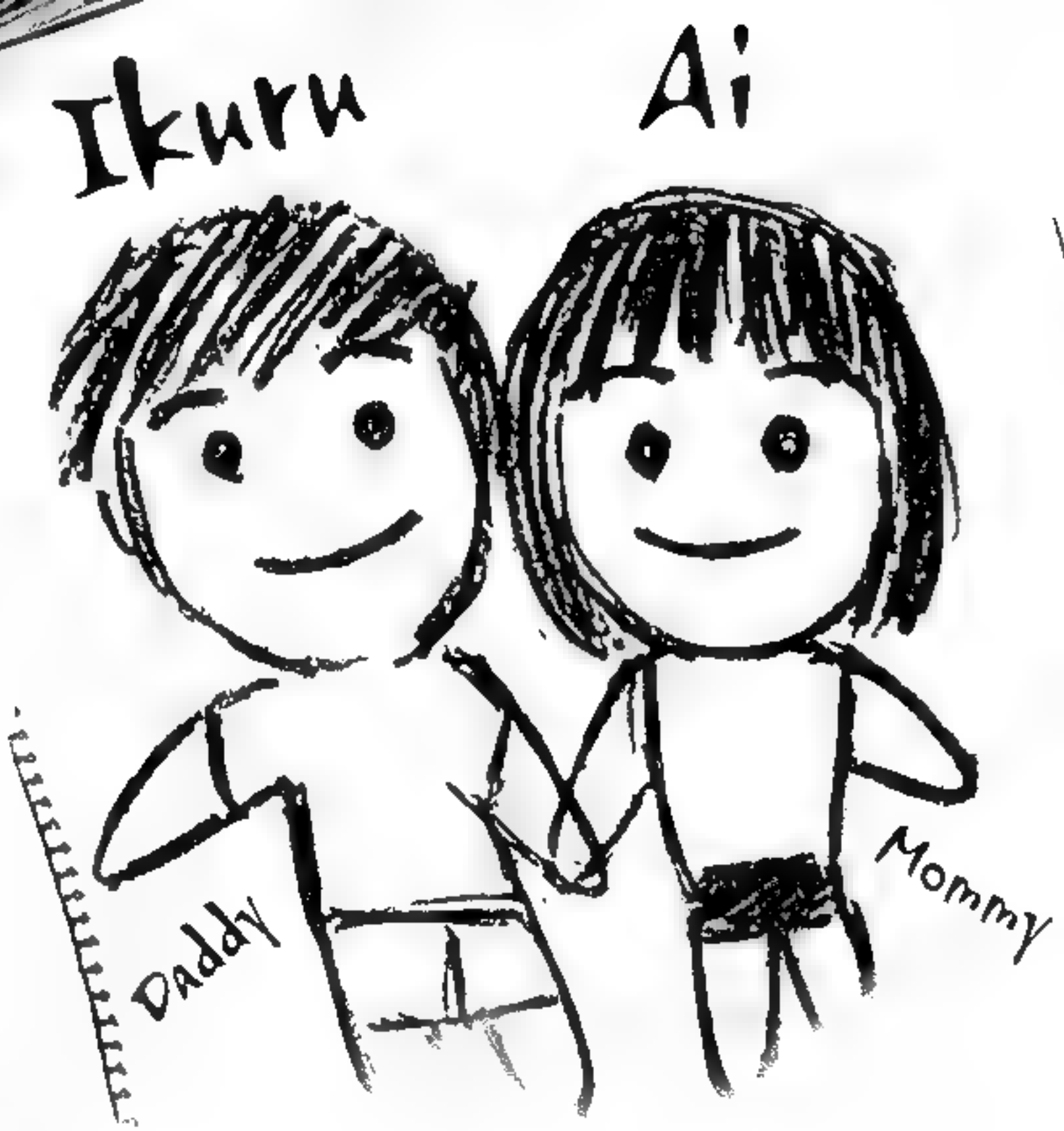
HAA-!

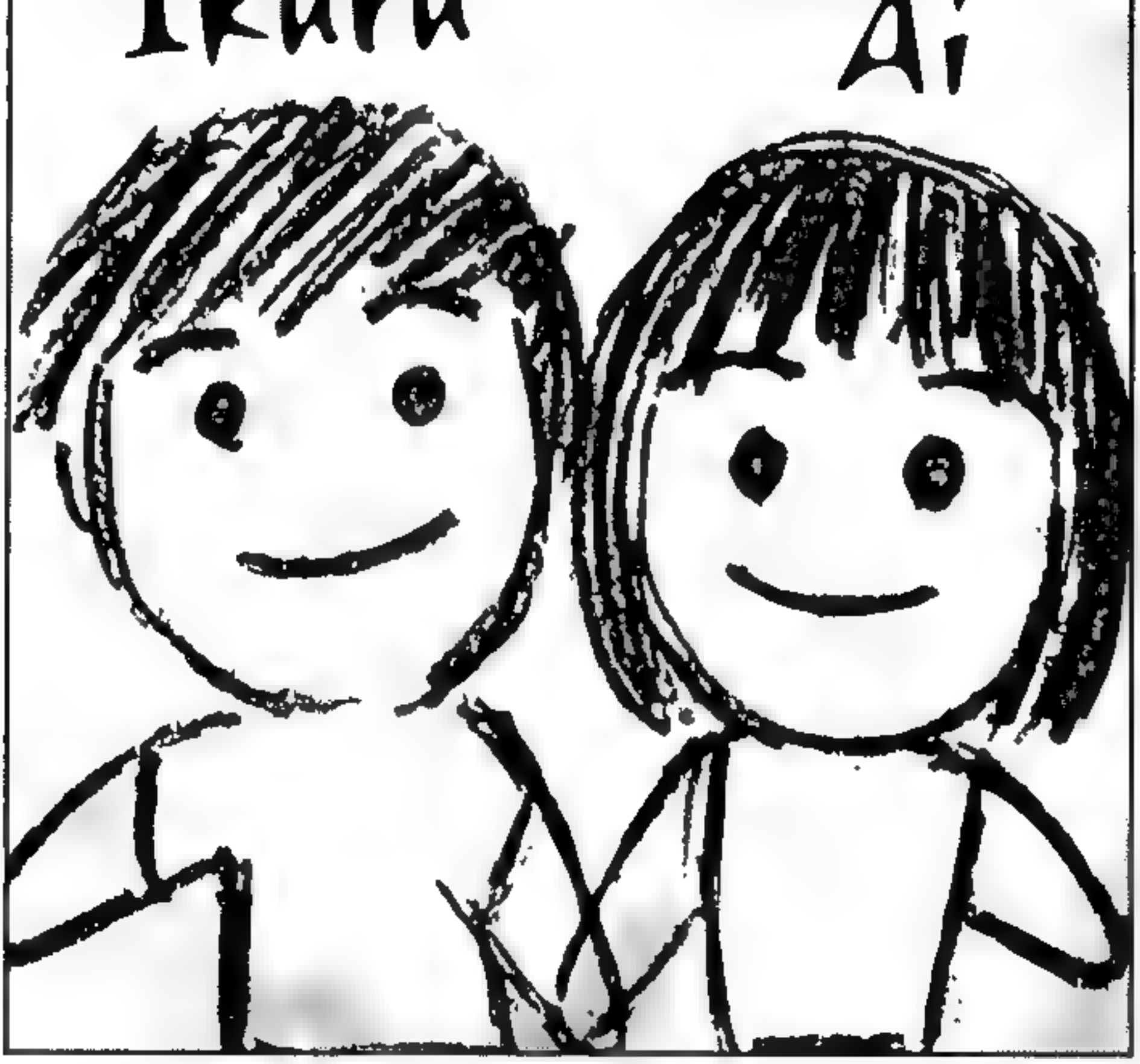
WAAH!

Now,
go on!

AHH!

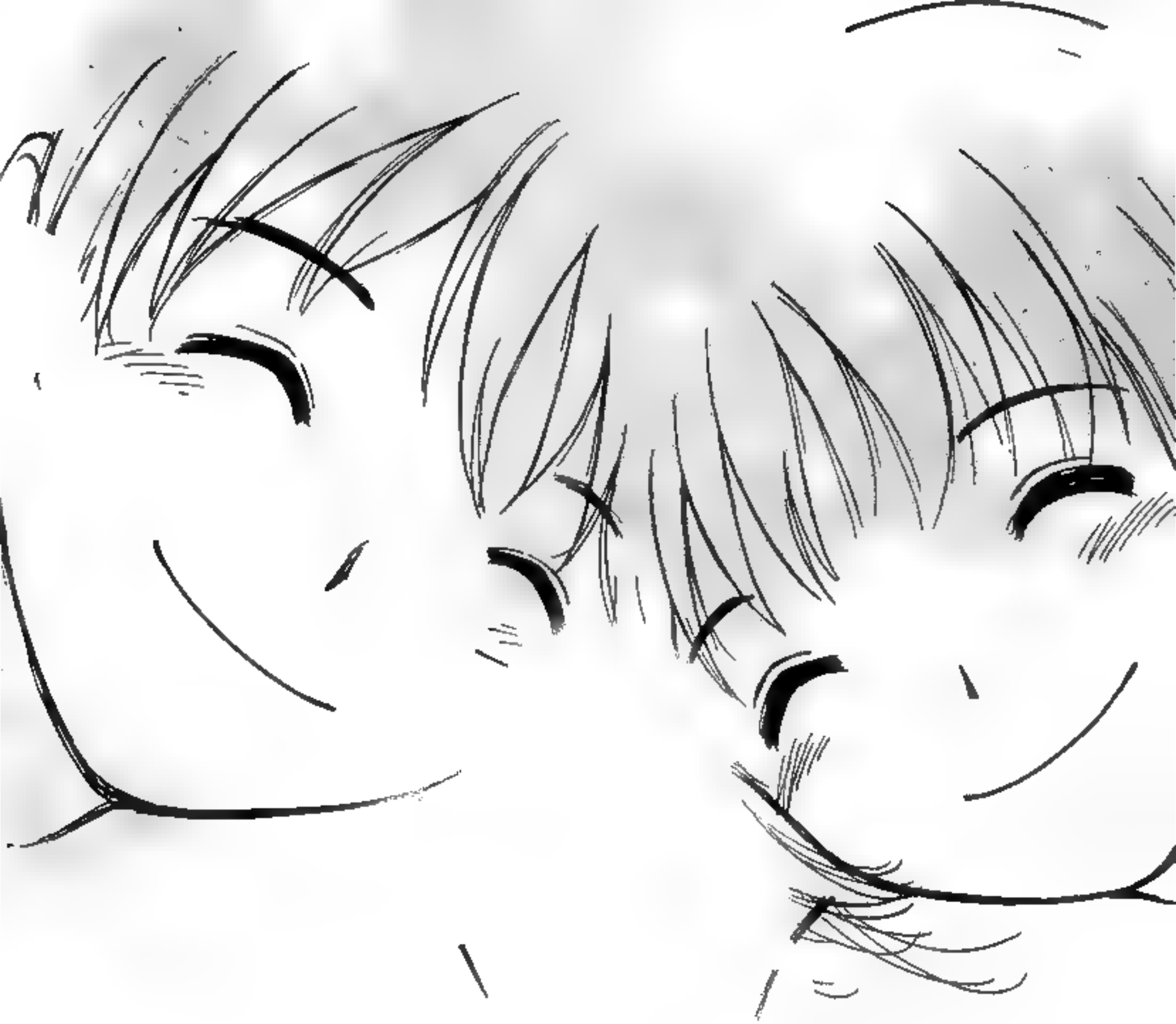
AH!!


Ikuru
Ai
Daddy
Mommy

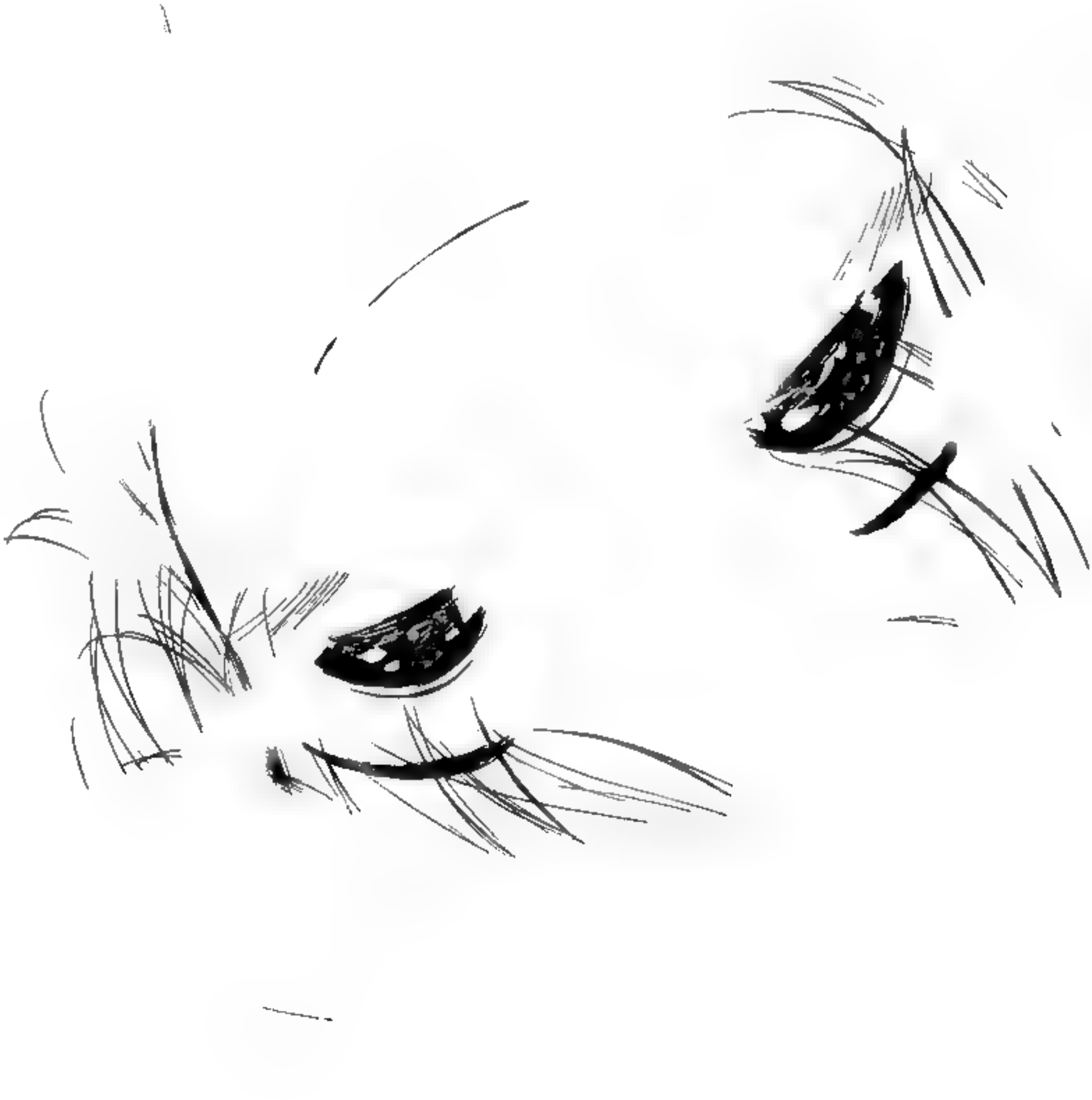



DAD...

MOM...



Thank you for letting me be born-



愛人 [AI-REN]

-Fin-

It's been my great honor working on this series, first as a fan, then as a translator, and finally as a QCer. It is bittersweet to see it end, but I am forever thankful for wonderful experiences I had with fellow staffs who helped me to grow along the way. It is vivid as yesterday when I first volunteer myself to translate Ai-Ren back in May 2004. Heh, I remember that my translation was so rough, it gave p00kie quite a headache. ^^; I'm sure some of you remembered when my ranting was becoming longer and weirder. Then came a moment when we couldn't find the last volume... Thankfully, Gari was able to pick up the slack and finish this series. I had good laughs, many thoughts, and some tears while working on this series... and you should too. If anything, this is the series that proves nudity serves its purpose to enhance the story, emotion, characters and drama, instead of being a focal point for the sake of nudity. That is what separates from true Seinen series from Hentai series. Before I forget, I would like to thank p00kie (wonderful editor), Gari (great translator), NiNiNhA, (the first translator) and of course, fans of Ai-Ren for supporting until the end. I am getting chatty again ^^;"

-BigVinny

Thus ends Ai-Ren. Although it's not really my type of manga, I really appreciated the story. I don't think Tanaka-sensei pulled any punches, or did anything specific to cater to the readers, which I really respect. I've only had a small, and short role in bringing this manga to the english speaking public, but I feel proud that I've had the opportunity to participate in something unique. As much as I love Kawashita Mizuki's art, and Kusunoki Kei's stories, and both their humor, it's really nice to have a change of pace. Finally, I'd like to thank everybody else who contributed to this project, including the readers. It's because of all of you that we've come this far. Thank you.

-Gari

[AI-REN]

Well, it was a good run. Despite the loss of our hero and heroine, I really liked the ending. As much as their limited lifespan was emphasized, had they somehow survived, the story would've felt... I dunno, cheap. Anyway, as a whole, I really love this manga. I remember when I was assigned the project back at chapter 16, and thinking "bleh, I don't even read Ai-Ren." I'm glad I was though, I would never have known what I was missing. The story was pretty good, but what really impressed me was the storytelling - the use of color, shading, complexity, and style in general, things that, as an editor, are most likely far more noticeable to me than to the average reader (like that scene where Haruka-sensei sees "Death"). It was also nice seeing how Tanaka-sensei's artistic style developed, especially between volumes 2 and 3 (a fairly major improvement at that). Anyways, you've stuck with us this long, and I hope the ending didn't disappoint. Thanks for reading, thanks to our friends over at KMTS for starting things off back in the day, and thanks to friends here at Solaris and elsewhere for helping out as needed.

-p00k

Solaris-SVU
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**The Lovers**
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JETS COMICS

# 愛人 [AI-REN]

あいれん［愛人］(ai-ren)
An artifical being created to provide mental comfort in the final stages of a terminally ill patient's life.

田中ユタカ 5

Yutaka Tanaka

JETS COMICS

愛人 [AI-REN] 5

田中ユタカ

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She'll be waiting to greet you with a "Welcome home."

Don't worry. No matter what happens, your Ai-Ren will be here.

AI-REN

Produced by Yutaka Tanaka

愛人 [AI-REN]

YOUNG ANIMAL ヤングアニマル

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